



GEORGE ELIOT  
SILAS MARNER

EDITED  
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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## PREFACE

THE notes are intended to save the teacher in Indian Colleges from the drudgery of dictating explanations of passages, and to remove any difficulty which the Indian student might experience in reading *Silas Marner* by himself. Though sufficiently voluminous, they are not more than the editor has found necessary in teaching his own classes.

In preparing the Introduction he has consulted Professor Raleigh's *English Novel* and the article on the Novel in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *George Eliot's Life*, edited by J. W. Cross, Leslie Stephen's *George Eliot* in the English Men of Letters Series, and the article on Mary Anne Cross by the same author in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.





# INTRODUCTION

## § 1. THE ENGLISH NOVEL BEFORE GEORGE ELIOT.

WHAT is a Novel? By what stages did it reach the form characteristic of it in George Eliot's day? These are questions which a student might well ask before commencing a study of George Eliot's works, and we shall endeavour to answer them as briefly as may be.

A true novel is an artistic representation of human life. It generally 'hinges on a love affair', but that the love interest is not absolutely essential to a work of fiction is proved by Stevenson's delightful *Treasure Island*. It may assume any one of many forms. It may be written in the first, second, or third persons—'autobiographical', epistolary, or narrative and descriptive. It may be historical, or descriptive of contemporary manners; didactic, or innocent of any conscious moral purpose; wide in its outlook as Scott, or narrow as Jane Austen; sentimental as Dickens, or cynical as Thackeray. It may be a thousand things. But it must be a full, faithful, and pleasing presentation of Life. The field selected may be narrow, but within that field the treatment should be full.

In a *novel* (from *novellus*, diminutive of Latin *novus*, new; through the Italian *novella*), the characters, the incidents, and the plot are 'new', but are based on lines parallel with those of actual experience. And although the fantastic and unreal may figure in some novels, the characters even here conform to the laws of the imaginary world invented by the author, and are true to themselves and to their surroundings. A novel implies 'a certain adherence to the normal conditions of experience'. It is this which distinguishes it from the Romance. Its purpose may be satirical.

instructive, political, religious, philosophical, but these are side-issues. The main purpose of a novel is, and must be, to please by painting a succession of scenes from nature, and by 'a thread of emotional narrative'.

The vital principle of a novel, like that of the Drama, is to show how a succession of interesting events reaches a climax through the clash of opposing characters and interests amid the influence of external events, fate, or chance. But as the imitation afforded by the Drama is more direct—we see the characters, hear their words—so is its range less extensive than that of the Novel. It is more selective, less detailed. It is the presentation on the stage of emotional human life in action. It holds 'the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'. And this it has to do within the compass of an evening's entertainment. The vital events of a period, the salient points in some human history, the climax of happiness or misery in the story of some human soul with the causes that lead up to it, contracted to a span, and presented on the stage, sparkling, scintillating, with all the backgrounds and interludes omitted—in the space of three hours! This is Drama as distinguished from the Novel, in which description takes the place of stage scenery and properties, and of visible action, and there is more room for the detailed and gradual development of plot and character. The condensed significance of dramatic dialogue, hurrying on the action, is not required in the Novel.

The Novel gives opportunity for serious or amusing reflection, and is therefore found in countries where there are traditions and a settled social order. It is best written by the author who is old enough to have had a large and varied experience of life, while still possessing much of the imaginative faculty of youth.

A novel contains plot, incident, dialogue, reflection, comedy, and pathos. It corresponds to the fullness of human life, of which it is the imaginative reproduction. It is characterized by fullness rather than by form.

George Eliot possessed all the qualities necessary for a writer of fiction—imagination, sympathy, sincerity, humour, and pathos, besides narrative, reflective, and dramatic power. But she was also fortunate in coming on the scene when the Novel had arrived at full maturity in English Literature, when it had certain forms, elastic yet sufficiently well defined, sanctioned by custom, familiarized by examples, into which she could throw the contents of her mind, shaping them so as to represent without distortion or compression the fullness of human life. Let us then briefly summarize the stages by which the Novel arrived at the condition in which George Eliot found it.

After the Norman Conquest and until the fifteenth century Metrical Romances supplied in England the place afterwards occupied by the Prose Tale. In the beginning of the sixteenth century brief stories, translated into English prose from the Latin 'Gesta Romanorum' were printed. The legends of Arthur, compiled mainly from French sources by Sir Thomas Malory in his book, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, written in 1469 or 1470, were printed by Caxton in 1485. They are written in simple and clear English, and substitute for mediaeval allegory an attempt to interpret the human heart. In their absence of any definite claim to historical truth, and in their clearly-stated intention to amuse, these legends mark the beginning of literary art in English prose fiction; but their lack of unity and cohesion, their description of heroic adventures rather than the careful study of character and manners, proclaim that the dawn of the Novel was not yet. *Le Morte d'Arthur* is a romance, not a novel, and, as Professor Raleigh has said, it became the feeder of poetry rather than of prose. Similar remarks apply to the numerous prose translations of mediaeval romances printed by Caxton, and to Lord Berners's *Huon of Bordeaux* (printed 1534). Prose romances were exceedingly popular in England in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries among the lower orders, but they could only maintain their position among

the literary and cultured classes by adopting some aristocratic distinction of style. Take for example Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (published 1590), where the pastoral convention enables the author to lead his characters through a succession of improbable adventures untrammelled by the conditions of real life, while word-play and abundance of ornament raise it to a level above that of the popular romance. But prose romances were doomed to fall before the new artistic forms of the Renaissance.

We can trace the first beginnings of the English Novel in the *Novella* of Italy. The popularity of numerous translations of Italian novels in the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign (e.g. Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, 1566-7) showed that there was a demand for the tale of contemporary life and manners, as distinguished from the recital of the wonderful adventures of legendary heroes of romance. John Lyly set himself to satisfy this demand in his *Euphues* (printed 1579), and his success encouraged many imitators like Munday, Dickenson, Barnabe Rich, and Lodge. Unfortunately Lyly's style, laden with allusions to the classics and to (supposed) natural history, supported by alliteration, and a perpetual balancing of word and phrase, set an example of prose writing so difficult and cumbersome as to make the literary aspirant prefer to express himself in verse rather than in the fashionable prose of the period.

The beginning of realism in English prose fiction is seen in the autobiographical pamphlets of Greene and Nash (also in the latter's *Jack Wilton*, 1594), which describe contemporary London life in its more squalid, dissipated, and even criminal, aspects. But these essays in prose fiction lacked vigorous narrative style and a properly developed plot. It was a poetic and dramatic age, and the novel was for a time eclipsed by the play.

After the closing of the theatres in 1642, and during the Civil Wars, cultivated people sought distraction from the turmoils of real life in scientific and literary

pursuits. They also amused themselves with reading French heroic romances, then freely translated and imitated in England. These romances were marked by the superhuman valour of the hero, the predominance of the sentimental love-interest in war and politics, the introduction of well-known classical and oriental characters, such as Antony and Cleopatra, and the peculiar construction of the narrative, in which the main action was retarded by endless digressions and sub-plots.

Restoration drama and fiction were alike permeated by the 'heroic' temper. Love, honour, and ambition are the swelling themes which characterize the plays of Dryden and the romances of Cowley, Sir George Mackenzie, and Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery. The former were modelled upon the plays of Corneille; the latter upon the heroic romances of Scudéry and La Calprenède. The 'hero' tended to become a conventional type, and it was the monotonous repetition of this type that killed the heroic literature of the seventeenth century in England. It survived, however, for a time in fashionable salons and polite coteries. Mrs. Aphra Behn deserves credit for an attempt to bring contemporary fiction into closer relation with real life. But her style is thoroughly conventional, and reflects the sentimental extravagance of polite literature of the period. Congreve was more successful in his *Incognita*, 1697, which perhaps more than any other English work of the seventeenth century deserves the name of Novel. John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), though far from being regarded as fiction by its author, contains vivid portrait-painting, and is written with admirable clearness and simplicity.

In the reign of Queen Anne the periodical essay took the place afterwards occupied by the novel. In character-painting, in the description of contemporary manners, in clear and simple narrative, the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* are not surpassed by the most brilliant examples of modern fiction.

Still nearer to the actual realization of the ideal of

fiction comes Defoe, whose detailed descriptions, photographic accuracy of observation, and studied simplicity of effect create an almost weird impression of truth, especially in his immortal *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

All these works, however, lacked in a greater or less degree the two essential qualities of the novel—psychological analysis and plot-construction. The English novel had not yet seen the light. The decline of the Drama in the eighteenth century prepared the way for that event. People took to reading plays instead of seeing them acted. And then the vogue of the novel, when it should arrive, was assured. For it is easier to read a novel than to read a play. Description takes the place of stage directions, and the reader is often spared the trouble of inferring the nature of the characters from the dialogue. The novelist is his own interpreter. So no surprise need be felt at the success of the little fat bookseller, Samuel Richardson, when thinking to help the cause of religion and virtue (and incidentally to teach by examples the art of letter-writing) by describing the triumph and reward of virtue in the person of a maid-servant, he found himself famous as the first great English novelist. For great he certainly is in his knowledge of the human (and especially of the female) heart, and in the skilful and elaborate construction of plot.

*Clarissa Harlowe*, the story of a maiden cruelly deceived and shamelessly seduced, established Richardson's fame upon a firm foundation, and there was nothing to diminish it in his third great work, *Sir Charles Grandison*. In spite of its merits the epistolary style of Richardson has certain obvious disadvantages, among which may be mentioned the tedious evolution of the plot, the statuesque pose of the characters, and the absence of direct comment by the author. These drawbacks were avoided in the works of Fielding, more of a man and more of a gentleman than Richardson, who showed virile strength, movement, and power in his 'comic epic', *Tom Jones* (1749)—an unrivalled picture of contemporary life

and manners as seen by a wise, sympathetic, tolerant and good-natured man of the world.

The modern reader of Fielding's novels is distracted and annoyed by the incidental stories—the recital by the characters of the events of their own lives—and by the numerous digressions in which the author discourses at length on life and literature. One misses too in all these eighteenth-century novelists the breath of poetry, 'the apparent pictures of unapparent realities,' which distinguish much of the work of the Victorian novelists.

In 1748 (the same year as *Clarissa* and a year before *Tom Jones*) appeared *Roderick Random* by Smollett, and from that date to the present time the literary market has been deluged with works of fiction.

*Roderick Random* is a prominent example of what is known as 'the picaresque romance'—which Professor Raleigh defines as 'describing realistically the shifts and adventures, perils and escapes, of a light-hearted, witty, spring-heeled knave, who goes through all worldly vicissitudes, thus lending himself to his creator's purpose of gaining the opportunity to describe or satirize all classes of society'.

This first group of great English novelists laid the foundation on which all subsequent English fiction has been built. The next group consists of Laurence Sterne, Dr. Johnson, and Oliver Goldsmith. Of these, the first was remarkable for extracting the maximum of pathos and humour from the minimum of incident—for 'sensibility' in fact; and he carried on the sentimental tradition of Richardson. His *Tristram Shandy*, commenced in 1759, was completed, so far as it ever was completed, in 1766, and the *Sentimental Journey* in 1768. The incidents in his works are so loosely strung together as hardly to deserve the name of plot. He takes an incident, and deftly turns it inside out, revealing its twofold aspect of humour and pathos, and then he drifts on.

Dr. Johnson descended into the arena of fiction in order to relieve the pressure of debt, and the fact, that



he chose this method of quickly raising money, is in itself evidence of the vogue of the novel in the eighteenth century. His *Rasselas* (1759) is a variant upon the same theme—'the vanity of human wishes'—he had dealt with in verse ten years before. He showed that the novel 'could be used to give entertainment to a sermon, and in this he was to have a multitude of followers'.

Goldsmith was, like Richardson and Sterne, a member of the sentimental school. His *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) combines the pathos, conversational power and wit of Sterne (without any taint of indecency) with a sweetness and condensation all its own. The *Vicar* teaches the undying lesson that the gods do not trouble themselves about trifles. Character, not material happiness or prosperity, matters in this world.

The eighteenth-century novelists showed the influence of the prevailing 'Classical School', the school of 'reason and common sense', satisfied on the whole with the existing social order, and with the religious and political ideals which it embodied, and content, therefore, to judge individuals by their greater or less conformity with those ideals.

Romanticism reveals or speculates upon the significance of nature and man as apart from custom and social relationships. It leaves the trodden path, the neat suburban walk, and enters the enchanted forest of mystery, wonder, and terror. The Romantic movement was as if a sudden gust blew out the torchlight of reason, while the wind shook the window-panes, the lightning flashed in the sky, and the whole mystery of Life and Nature thundered its laughter at the complacent satisfaction of the eighteenth century. This is not the place to linger over the Romantic movement. Suffice it to say that in Politics it advocated revolutionary doctrines, while in Art it manifested itself, among other ways, in a sense of mystery and horror. In prose fiction the Romantic Revival produced two schools—the School of Terror and the School of Theory,

the former influenced by fear of the unknown, the latter by hatred of the existing constitution of society.

As early as 1764, Walpole in his *Castle of Otranto* had associated the supernatural with fiction, but in his hands the supernatural, instead of acquiring what Coleridge gave it—'a human interest and a semblance of truth'—reminds one of the monstrosities of a pantomime. A real sense of terror and mystery was communicated to fiction by the works of Mrs. Radcliffe, whose *Mysteries of Udolpho* was published in 1794. 'Monk' Lewis and Maturin followed on the same lines. Richardson and Sterne had cultivated sentiment for its own sake. Rousseau employed it in the service of theory to show that the natural impulses of the human heart are superior to the rules imposed by society. Inspired by him a school of novelists arose, among whom William Godwin ranks highest. His views greatly influenced Shelley. Oriental romance was supplied by William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786). The close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth witnessed the triumph of three ladies in the realm of fiction. They were Frances Burney, who hardly rose above the commonplace characters she described; Miss Edgeworth, whose *Castle Rackrent* made Englishmen acquainted with the real as opposed to the comic or burlesque Irishman, and inspired Scott with the notion of placing the character of Scotsmen in a truer light before English readers; and Jane Austen, unrivalled in the field of domestic satire. Their delicate delineation of family life and domestic manners have earned for their works the title 'Romances of the Tea-Table', and their most exciting scenes might well be described as 'storms in a tea-cup'.

With Sir Walter Scott we draw near to the times of George Eliot, and to the environment in which her mind and character were moulded. He saw life steadily and saw it whole. Like Shakespeare he is the universal genius. In him we find the touch of humour which gives life to Romance.

We may pass over the sparkling theatricalities of Lytton and Disraeli, and come to Dickens and Thackeray, who between them explored the whole of English Early Victorian and Georgian life. With Thackeray we are in the drawing-room; with Dickens in the poorer streets and slums of London; with Scott in the Romantic past. But with all three it is human life that confronts us, warm and palpitating, claiming our interest and sympathy.

In Charlotte and Emily Brontë we feel the fiery passion which often glows beneath the hard surface of northern character.

Charles Reade attains in the *Oloister and the Hearth* an excellence which places him almost on a level with Scott as a writer of the mediæval Historical Romance.

In all these Early Victorian novelists (and Charles Kingsley and Mrs. Gaskell may well be added to their number) we see foreshadowed the great socialistic movement, which it will be the task of the present century to bring to completion, the realization of human life with all its silent endurance of sorrow and injustice, as a necessary preliminary to its amelioration. Herein lies the master-key to George Eliot's heart, her intense sympathy for and love of suffering humanity, the Art which shall improve nature by striving with the Highest Artist to 'make the crooked straight and the rough places smooth'.

## § 2. LIFE OF GEORGE ELIOT.

Mary Anne Evans, known in fiction as George Eliot, was born in 1819 at Arbury Farm in Warwickshire. Her father, Robert Evans, was an able and energetic estate agent. He was twice married, and Mary Anne was the youngest child of the second marriage. From her fifth to her sixteenth year she attended schools at Attleborough, Nuneaton, and Coventry, and early showed a great love for reading and music. Her mother died in 1836, and her elder sister marrying

shortly afterwards, the charge of her father's household devolved upon Mary Anne, who proved herself a diligent and capable housekeeper. At this time, though only eighteen years of age, she was an assiduous student both of ancient and modern languages, and an omnivorous reader. She was also a devout, if somewhat morbid follower of evangelical Christianity, objecting to theatres and novel reading as dangerous to the religious life, and even to music, except when used in 'strict worship'. In 1839 she wrote her first poem (printed in the *Christian Observer* for January 1840, under the initials M. A. E.), on the subject of the brevity of human life. In March 1841 she moved with her father from Griff (which had been her home from the time she was four months old) to Coventry. There she became intimate with Mr. and Mrs. Bray. Mr. Bray was a prosperous ribbon manufacturer, who had devoted his leisure hours to reading and culture. Mrs. Bray was the sister of Charles Hennell, who had published in 1838 an *Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity*, in which he denied the divinity of Christ and the authenticity of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. The reading of this book and her association with the Brays combined with other causes to undermine Miss Evans's belief in Christianity as a divine revelation, and in 1842 she greatly incensed her father by refusing to go to church. She averted an open rupture by consenting to fall in with her father's wishes to the extent of attending divine service, but her views remained unchanged. She kept up her friendship with the Brays, and in 1844 began to translate Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, at the request of Miss Brabant, who was prevented from doing the work herself by her marriage with Charles Hennell. In spite of much discouragement and many difficulties the book was printed in 1846. In 1849 she lost her father, whom she had tended devotedly during his last illness. From him she inherited a small income. In June 1849 she accompanied the Brays on a short visit to the Continent, and when they returned to Europe, she remained for

nearly a year at Geneva, at the house of M. and Madame d'Albert. They became great friends, and M. d'Albert afterwards published French translations of several of her novels.

In March 1850 she returned to England under M. d'Albert's escort, and spent the next sixteen months with the Brays. In September 1851 she went to stay with the Chapmans in the Strand, as a boarder, and became assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, of which Mr. Chapman was part proprietor. The drudgery of editing, however, proved too much for her, and she ceased her editorial work when she moved into new lodgings in Cambridge Street in October 1853. Her translation of Fenerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, the only book she ever published under her own name, appeared in July 1854. About this time Miss Evans was greatly attracted towards Positivism, with some of whose leaders she was on terms of intimate friendship. She also made the acquaintance of several men of eminence in literary and scientific circles. Among the latter was Herbert Spencer, who became one of her greatest friends. He introduced her to G. H. Lewes, with whom she went to live in July 1854. A marriage was impossible as Lewes had a wife and family living, although his home had been broken up for two years. They left England together and spent the winter at Berlin, returning to London in March 1855. In September they took up their residence at Richmond, where they lived for three years, working hard to support Lewes's wife and children as well as themselves. Mr. Lewes published a successful *Life of Goethe*, and Miss Evans wrote articles for the reviews and magazines. In 1856 they visited Ilfracombe, and while there Miss Evans first expressed her intention of writing fiction. She was familiar with the standard works of former English novelists as well as a careful and critical reader of the best contemporary fiction, and it had always been a vague dream of hers that sometime or other she might write a novel. She had even gone so far as to write an introductory chapter

describing a Staffordshire village, and life in the neighbouring farm-houses. But in September 1856, under the stimulus of Lewes's companionship and encouragement, she began *Amos Barton*, which was followed by *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story*, and by *Janet's Repentance*—the three tales forming the series known as *Scenes from Clerical Life*. The tales were published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and received high praise from such authorities as Dickens, Thackeray, and Froude. Dickens at once detected the sex of the writer in spite of the masculine pseudonym 'George Eliot', under which these and all her subsequent works appeared. His ungrudging praise and friendly sympathy at this critical period of her career doubtless did much to encourage George Eliot in the path she had marked out for herself. In 1859 *Adam Bede* was published, and at once established the reputation of the writer as one of the greatest of living novelists. Sixteen thousand copies were sold in the first year. *The Mill on the Floss* followed in April 1860, and this too proved a great success. *Silas Marner* (March 1861), by many considered her most perfect work, marked the close of the first period of her authorship. She now formed the project of writing an historical novel dealing with the career of Savonarola. The idea was suggested by a visit to Florence in the summer of 1860. The story was published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in monthly parts, and cost George Eliot an amount of labour and study, which, says Mr. Leslie Stephen, 'would have qualified her to write a history.' Mr. Cross tells us that the book 'ploughed into her more than any of her other books'. In her own words she 'began it a young woman—she finished it an old woman'.

In 1863 the Leweses, having previously left Wadsworth, moved into the Priory, at Regent's Park, which was their home during the remainder of their united lives. In September 1864 George Eliot commenced a drama on the subject of the *Spanish Gypsy*, but was interrupted by illness, and gave up the task for

a time, turning instead to *Felix Holt*, which she completed in May 1866. She then returned to the *Spanish Gypsy*, which caused her much labour and depression of spirits, and was not finished till April 1868. It was intended to illustrate certain doctrines of duty and hereditary influence, and was written under the influence of Positivism. But George Eliot, though a good verser-writer, was not a great poet. She returned to the novel of personal experience in *Middlemarch*, which may be taken as reflecting certain aspects of her life at Coventry. It was published in December 1872—nearly 20,000 copies being sold in the first year. *Daniel Deronda*, her last novel, was published in 1876, and was financially an even greater success than *Middlemarch*.

George Eliot was now in prosperous circumstances and able to enjoy the luxury of frequent travel both in England and on the Continent in the company of Mr. Lewes. They especially loved the quiet of the country, and in December 1876 they bought a house in Surrey at Witley, near Godalming, where they hoped to settle finally and to give up town. In 1878 George Eliot wrote *The Impressions of Theophrastus Such*—a volume of essays written in a heavy, didactic, somewhat pedantic, vein. But before it was published Mr. Lewes died (November 28, 1878). George Eliot was for many weeks overcome with grief, and her first revival of activity was devoted to preparing his unfinished writings for the press, and to founding in his memory a 'George Henry Lewes studentship'.

In April 1880 she married Mr. Cross, feeling that she 'would be a better, more loving creature than she could have been in solitude'. They made a tour on the Continent, returning to England in July, and after a short stay at Witley went to London, where they lived at Chelsea.

George Eliot caught a chill at a concert at the Albert Hall on Saturday, December 18; the heart was found to be seriously affected, and she died on the night of December 22, 1880.

### § 3. LITERARY AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS. RELIGIOUS VIEWS.

(a) *Her work.* Whatever may be the ultimate verdict of posterity, there can be no doubt of the success which George Eliot's novels achieved in her own lifetime. This was partly due to her peculiar point of view—the study of life in relation to certain religious and philosophical problems; partly to the circumstance that most of her works were written after the other great earlier Victorian novelists were dead, or had ceased to publish, or had survived the period of their greatest excellence. The importance of her union with Mr. Lewes too cannot be overestimated in accounting for her literary triumphs. He stood between her and the world, comforting her in her frequent fits of depression, helping her to overcome her constitutional diffidence, stimulating her ambition. Her literary work—all that counts—began with their union, and ended with his death. Whatever judgement we, as moralists, may pass on her defiance of the world and of convention, we must recognize that it was her association with Lewes that made George Eliot's work possible. She could never have stood alone. A delicate, sensitive woman, she needed love, sympathy, support, and direction, and she found them all in Lewes. Writing to a friend in 1857 she says in regard to this matter: 'If I live five years longer the positive result of my existence on the side of truth and goodness will outweigh the small negative good that would have consisted in my not doing anything to shock others.' The prophecy was more than fulfilled.

We must set against any evil consequences that may have resulted to the cause of virtue and morality by George Eliot's example the great positive benefit which humanity has derived from her works. May we not hope that in this case the *good* she did will live after her, and that the evil—if evil it was—is 'interred with her bones'? She always regarded her



connexion with Lewes as a marriage, though without the legal sanction, spoke of him as her 'husband', dedicated her books to him, and frequent references in her diary and letters testify to the whole-heartedness of her love and devotion to him, and to the happiness of their common life.

But although she owed much to circumstances George Eliot owed more to herself—to her genius, industry and nobility of character. She told Mr. Cross that, in all she considered her best writing, there was a 'not herself', which took possession of her, and that she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit, as it were, was acting.

She had that greatest of all virtues as a writer—sincerity, and took a very serious view of her duties and responsibilities as an author. 'They (her books) are written out of my deepest belief, and as well as I can, for the great public,' she writes. And again, 'writing is part of my religion, and I can write no word that is not prompted from within.' And on another occasion, 'I will never write anything to which my whole heart, mind and conscience don't consent, so that I may feel that it was something—however small—which wanted to be done in the world, and that I was just the organ for that small bit of work.'

Though inclined, as she said, 'to be lazy in earthly things,' she had as great a contempt for slipshod work as for incompetent opinion. Witness her 'true gospel' that 'the greatest disgrace is to insist on doing work for which we are unfit—to do work of any sort badly', her contempt for 'amateurs', and her belief in 'that dignity of work which comes from the thoroughness of doing, rather than from the *order* of the work'.

To genius and conscientious labour she added the deepest love of and sympathy with humanity. Her earlier works represent her own youthful experiences in the Midlands. They show an intimate knowledge of the family life of the humbler classes, and paint with humour, pathos, and tenderness their joys and sorrows. Indeed, George Eliot was at one with Words-

worth not only in her belief that the highest enjoyment comes not with the actual vision itself but with the reproduction and transformation of the scene in the imagination, but in her perception of the tragedy and comedy of the commonplace. Her first work of fiction, the *Scenes from Clerical Life*, contains portraits and actual reproductions of remembered incidents. In *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss* some of her own relatives are painted, probably with more fidelity than she knew. Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss*, with her intelligence and sensibility, her striving to satisfy her higher aspirations and to attach a meaning to life, her ready response to affection, and her proud yet diffident nature, is George Eliot herself.

These works, with *Silas Marner*, owe their freshness and charm to her vivid memory of the scenes of her youth.

*Middlemarch* represents her mature judgement of English provincial life, and reflects her Coventry experiences.

But in her other later novels, *Felix Holt*, *Romola*, and *Daniel Deronda*, the setting is derived from her studies more than from actual experience; the didactic intention and the application of certain theories to human life is too apparent, and the style is apt to become heavy and pedantic. In *Romola* the background is historical—the Italian Renaissance. In *Felix Holt* we have a study of the Chartist movement. In *Daniel Deronda* the Jews come in for consideration, and ‘heredity’ is elevated into a religion.

In the opinion of most competent critics her earlier novels, considered as works of art, are her best. The philosophical and didactic intention is there latent, and the reader is free to enjoy the pictures of human life in all its humour and pathos without being distracted and disturbed by the intrusion of positivist doctrines or theories of heredity.

George Eliot was not by temperament an optimist. She never turned aside from a fact because it was unpleasant. She saw plainly enough the sum of human

miseries and deficiencies, though she believed they were capable of improvement. To use her own expression, she was a 'meliorist'—one who tries to better a condition of things admitted to be bad. She was, therefore, not likely to accept the conventional 'happy ending' in her novels.

In several of George Eliot's works we see a tragic female figure—herself; the ardent soul in search of the ideal, sensitive, impatient, subject to human passions and frailties, yet striving to realize her highest self, to find her duty and to follow it, regardless of her own interests and inclinations. The tragedy may consist in the difficulty of discovering the ideal; or in the difficulty of the 'adjustment of our individual needs to the dire necessities of our lot'; or in a sense of divided duty.

Maggie Tulliver grows, like a violet on a rocky soil, deriving intellectual and spiritual sustenance from sordid and commonplace surroundings. She longs for happiness, but finds it can only be obtained at the cost of injury to others. She seeks peace in renunciation, but the flesh rebels. She finds that 'renunciation remains sorrow, though sorrow willingly borne'. The tragedy consists in the struggle between happiness and duty. 'We can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that for the sake of obeying the divine voice within us, for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives.'

Romola, denied conjugal happiness, deceived in her hopes from religion, yet striving to 'keep alive the flame of unselfish emotion by which a life of sadness might well be a life of active love', finds the solution of her difficulties in the service of her fellow creatures.

Fedalma, the heroine of the *Spanish Gypsy*, is distracted between her love for her destined bridegroom and her sense of duty to the race from which she sprung.

Gwendolen Harleth, in *Daniel Deronda*, serves a sad apprenticeship to the world during her married life

with Grandcourt, an incarnation of selfish cruelty, and is saved 'as by fire' by the teaching of Daniel Deronda, her 'outer conscience', who urges her 'to use her past sorrow as a preparation for life' instead of letting it spoil her life.

George Eliot was essentially feminine, and with instinctive refinement she avoided the nastier elements of human life. 'She was too thoroughly feminine to be quite at home in the psychology of the male animal.' Her heroes are the immaculate beings which husbands and brothers are apt to appear to adoring wives and admiring sisters. Her villains evince a feminine enjoyment of petty tyranny. She shows a woman's severity towards the mere man who is foolish enough to be attracted by superficial beauty in one of the opposite sex.

But in spite of all deductions George Eliot deserves her high rank as an English novelist by virtue of her sympathetic insight into human nature, her humour and pathos, her dramatic gift, her powers of description and dialogue, and her moral force. Explicitly and implicitly her works afford a 'criticism of life'. They 'hold the mirror up to nature', and they abound in passages of moral wisdom and truth, the natural efflorescence of a beautiful and reflective soul.

(b) *Her personality.* George Eliot had strongly marked features, a massive brow, deep penetrating eyes, a sweet, low voice, and a manner whose charm was due to absolute sincerity and kindness of heart. Her bearing was dignified and impressive, a little awe-inspiring to strangers, but this impression was soon removed on a closer acquaintance, for, says Mr. Cross, 'no one could be more capable of enjoying and of communicating genuine, loving, hearty, uncontrollable laughter.'

She had the true woman's quick wit, ready sympathy, versatility of mind, and 'delight in everything worthy—even the smallest thing—for its own sake'.

She was an excellent housekeeper—'I like a clean kitchen', she wrote, 'better than any other room'—

delicate with her needle, and an admirable musician. She loved to listen to good music. 'How music,' she writes in her journal, 'that stirs all one's devout emotions, blends everything into harmony—makes one feel part of one whole which one loves all alike, losing the sense of a separate self.'

An omnivorous reader, she retained the substance of what she read, although she had a poor verbal memory, and could never trust herself to write a quotation without verifying it.

She had feeble health, and was subject to acute fits of depression. She was also naturally very shy and diffident, and was always plunged into de-pair when in the throes of composition, although when once a book was completed she was able to detach herself from it and to recognize its merits. Thus she says, 'My books don't seem to belong to me after I have once written them; and I find myself delivering opinions about them as if I had nothing to do with them.' She loved country air and scenery, but the noise and dull skies of London depressed her unspeakably. 'The wide sky, the not London, makes a new creature of me in half an hour. I come back to London, and again the air is full of demons.'

The key to her character was sympathy for others, an infinite capacity for receiving and communicating love. She was grateful for friendship, and responded to any friendly overtures with a full heart. In proportion as she respected piety—which to her was synonymous with venerating love—she hated hard curiosity, and she destroyed almost all her friends' letters, lest they should fall into the hands of strangers after her death. She was rather severe in her judgement both of reviewers and journalists, regarding them as people who wrote bad English in a hurry for effect. One genuine and competent criticism outweighed in her opinion 'a great deal of damnatory praise from ignorant journalists'.

But apart from the nervous shrinking of a sensitive author from newspaper criticism, her dislike of 'journalism' was only the negative aspect of her love

of truth and sincerity. She loved to cultivate the nobler feelings, mysticism—‘the delighted bathing of the soul in emotions which surpass the outlines of definite thought’, and poetry—‘emotions blending with thought’.

In proportion as her intellect detached itself from religious dogma, her emotions learnt to love all that is pure, lovely, and of good report, and when her reason rejected any definite hope of happiness in a future life, her loving heart turned from thought of self to the service of suffering humanity.

(c) *Her religious views.* This brings us to the subject of George Eliot’s religious views. From the age of fifteen to twenty-two she was an ardent follower of evangelical Christianity, and had abundant intercourse with earnest people of various religious sects. Then her opinions changed. Writing to a former teacher—Miss Lewis—in 1841 she says, ‘My whole soul has been engrossed in the most interesting of all inquiries for the last few days, and to what result my thoughts may lead I know not—possibly to one that will startle you : but my only desire is to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error.’ The result of these inquiries was a definite rejection of dogmatic Christianity. We need not go into all the causes of this decision here. She disliked religious discussions, feeling that ‘*opinions* are a poor cement between human souls’ and commit one to statements that further reflection might modify. We have already touched upon the effect produced on her mind by Mr. Hennell’s *Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity*. The Calvinistic conception of Christianity she regarded as a religion based on pure selfishness. She was shocked at the union of deep religious feeling with a low moral tone among the humbler Methodists in her neighbourhood. Sir Walter Scott’s novels convinced her of the possibility of good lives being led by persons without strong religious opinions. Finally she came to regard the riddle of the painful earth as insoluble. But she soon lost the spirit of antagonism and bitterness which is apt to

attend the renunciation of any belief. She felt that religious systems must change or develop with the progress of humanity, but she had the deepest sympathy with 'any faith in which human sorrow and human longing for purity have expressed themselves'. She loved the poetry of Christianity, its appeal to the emotions and imagination, and she saw in the Christian religion the 'highest expression of the religious sentiment which has yet had its place in the history of mankind'. But the hope of immortality and heaven, the belief in a future world in which the inequalities and injustices of this world will be redressed, she regarded as a moral anaesthetic, tending to make us indifferent to the sufferings of our fellow creatures in this life in the belief that they will be recompensed hereafter. 'The highest calling and election', she said, 'is to do without opium.' 'It seems to me pre-eminently desirable that we should learn not to make our personal comfort a standard of truth.' 'I think the highest and best thing is rather to suffer with real suffering than to be happy in the imagination of an unreal good.' 'Resignation is a part of our life-task which has been too much obscured by unvernacular attempts at universal consolation.' All this simply means that she rejected the consolations of religion as unproven, and resigned herself to endure the pains of this transitory life with no sure and certain hope of the blessedness of an immortality of happiness hereafter. She did not deny an unknown cause: she only denied that such a conception is the proper basis of a practical religion. This 'agnosticism', however, instead of producing in her its ordinary effect of selfish materialism, made her more tender and sympathetic toward her fellow creatures. She found in the philosophy of Comte a system which more than any other fell in with her ideas of resignation and service. 'It was a limited adherence,' Mr. Cross tells us. 'Parts of his (Comte's) teaching were accepted, and other parts rejected.' She herself said, writing to a friend in 1861, 'I quite agree with you in regarding

conveniently die. Godfrey marries the girl he loves, and lives on the whole with as much happiness as is vouchsafed to most of us. George Eliot admitted this in a letter to Blackwood in February 1861, when she wrote, 'The Nemesis is a very mild one.' But Godfrey Cass was weak, not vicious, and we feel that a mild punishment was sufficient for one who was naturally kind-hearted and open to good influences.

The fallacy of imagining a measure will be easy because one has private motives for desiring it; the error of attributing a general sense of discontent to the absence of some definite good; the demoralizing hope that some lucky chance may obviate the results of our own evil or foolish actions,—are all illustrated in the case of Godfrey, who looks for some turn of fortune to save him from the consequences of his unfortunate marriage, attributes the vague dissatisfaction which he feels with life to the absence of children from his hearth, and supposes that because he wants to take Eppie into his home and to acknowledge her as his child, there will be no difficulty in persuading her to leave the weaver.

The book abounds in passages containing truths about human nature, what Matthew Arnold would call criticisms of life. Such are the following: 'The vindication of the loved object is the best balm affection can find for its wounds.' 'No disposition is a security from evil wishes to a man whose happiness hangs on duplicity.' 'It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable.' 'Our consciousness rarely registers the beginning of a growth within us any more than without us: there have been many circulations of the sap before we detect the smallest sign of the bud.' 'The yoke a man creates for himself by wrongdoing will breed hate in the kindest nature.' 'Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends to become an end in itself, and so to bridge over the loveless chasms of his life.'



*The characters—Silas Marner.* First, let us take the character which gives its title to the book, the pallid, short-sighted weaver, with bent back and prominent brown eyes.

Naturally of a loving and trusting disposition, he loses faith in God and man through the treachery of his friend, the false testimony of the lots, and the defection of his sweetheart. Expelled from Church-membership in the little community of Lantern Yard, he retires, a poor crushed creature, to Raveloe, where, like a spinning insect, he weaves cloth and hoards money, which makes him, like itself, hard and secluded, almost inhuman in his callous indifference to anything save himself and his gold.

The loss of his money drives him to despair, but Eppie comes to save him, and under her remedial influence his frozen heart melts, love and charity towards his neighbours revive, and in her happiness he finds his own. He recovers faith in God and love for man, and his devotion to Eppie is rewarded, when she refuses to leave him at Godfrey's request, or to acknowledge any one save him as her father.

*Godfrey Cass.* A blonde, handsome man. Physically strong and courageous, he lacks moral courage and the strength to do right 'in the scorn of consequence'. Trapped into a foolish and secret marriage, he falls into the hands of his wicked brother Dunstan, to whom he gives the money he has received as rent from one of his father's tenants, fearing to cross him in any way lest he should reveal his secret, and so shut him out for ever from the presence of the real object of his affection, Nancy Lammeter. His trust in some lucky accident to prevent the natural consequences of his own foolishness is apparently justified. Dunstan disappears; Molly dies in the snow on her way to denounce and expose her husband. His little child Eppie, too young to claim a father's protection, is adopted by Silas Marner, and Godfrey does not acknowledge her as his daughter, fearing lest by

doing so he should lose the chance of marrying Nancy.

His punishment is a childless marriage and the refusal of Eppie, grown up and engaged to marry a working-man, to accept the birthright, which he offers her too late. Kindly and good-natured, he fails through selfishness and moral cowardice.

*Dunstan Cass* is the villain of the piece. He is jealous of his brother Godfrey's good looks and popularity, and feels a malicious pleasure in watching the pain which he inflicts, when, having got Godfrey into his power, he bends him to his evil purposes, threatening constantly to reveal his secret marriage to the Squire, although he himself had been largely instrumental in bringing that marriage about. He makes Godfrey the instrument for robbing his father, and having by reckless riding killed Godfrey's horse, which was to have been sold in order to restore the money, he seeks to recoup himself by stealing Marner's gold. But in his hurry to escape from the weaver's cottage he falls into the stone-pit, and meets a well-merited death by drowning.

*The Squire.* Squire Cass was careless and easy-going from self-indulgence, until troubled by the consequences of his own slackness, when he became vindictive and revengeful. The death of his wife and the absence of a mother's refining influence from his home were largely responsible for the moral delinquencies of his children.

In spite of his slovenly dress and neglected person there was an air of authority and dignity about him, for he had never associated with any gentry higher than himself, and was accustomed to the homage of his humbler parishioners, among whom he not infrequently enjoyed 'the double pleasure of conviviality and condescension' at the village inn.

*Mr. Lammeter* was a man of a very different type. Grave and dignified, he showed the self-reliance which springs from self-respect and habitual self-control. His strong high-bred features and spare but healthy

person were in strong contrast, not only with the Squire's, but with the appearance of the Raveloc farmers generally.

*Mr. Kimble*, the village doctor, who practised by hereditary right rather than by acquired knowledge, and prescribed for his patients on the principle that what does no harm may do good, was a thin and agile man, cheery and vivacious except in playing whist, when he became irritable and counted the tricks and dealt the cards with an air of gloomy suspicion.

*Mr. Crackenthorp*, the rector, was a merry-eyed, small-featured, grey-haired man, with an ample neck-cloth, who set an example in social as well as in religious duties, and was as ready to compliment a pretty face, when occasion arose, as to visit the sick, or bury the dead.

*Nancy Lammeter*. First among the ladies of the village aristocracy comes Nancy Lammeter, who is introduced to us as a rustic beauty, delicately and daintily beautiful, as neat and precise in her dress as she was punctilious in the observance of her rigid little code of morals. Uneducated in a sense she was, having never been to any but a dame's school, and having little knowledge of arithmetic, and of other books than the Bible. Her pronunciation was not always correct, and her hands were hardened with household work. Yet she had all the essential qualities of a lady. Truth and honour, courtesy and self-respect, personal refinement springing from delicacy of thought marked her conduct, and, lest the picture be too perfect, let us add that she was a little proud and exacting, and 'as constant in her affection to a baseless opinion as towards an erring lover'.

*Priscilla Lammeter*. Her sister Priscilla had no personal beauty, but was a notable house-wife. She was very frank and outspoken in her opinions, and sometimes gave offence, as when she asked the Miss Gunns if they minded being ugly! Her good-natured, self-forgotten cheeriness and common sense made her a fit companion for her more sensitive sister Nancy, of

whose beauty she was proud without a trace of jealousy, and for whom she entertained a deep sisterly affection. Her rôle in life was to be the companion and protector of others, and she practised it with unflagging courage and devotion.

*Mrs. Osgood*, in her preciseness, neatness, and formal correctness of behaviour, was an elderly edition of her niece Nancy Lammeter, for whom she felt a deep though undemonstrative affection. Aunt and niece also resembled each other in personal character and natural refinement.

Mrs. Kimble was a stout, good-natured lady, very fond of her clever and amusing husband, while Mrs. Cracken-thorp—the rector's wife—was ‘a small blinking woman’, who was always sidgeling with her ornaments, twisting her features and making subdued noises. Coming to the humbler inhabitants of the village we notice two outstanding figures—Dolly Winthrop and Mr. Macey.

*The villagers.* Dolly Winthrop was a ‘comfortable’, good-looking, fresh-complexioned woman. No one had ever seen her weep, but she was grave and apt to sigh and shake her head, for she liked to dwell upon the sadder and more serious elements of life. She loved to be employed, and as the care of a large family of boys did not satisfy her tastes in that direction, she busied herself in helping her neighbours, and was always sought for when there was trouble or sickness or death in a family. She it was who, with her little son Aaron, came to see Silas Marner after the loss of his money, and tried to comfort him with her simple religious faith, and to persuade him to go to church. She had never heard of chapel, and when Silas said that he had once been accustomed to go there on Sundays, she refrained from inquiring further, lest ‘chapel’ might mean some haunt of wickedness. And it was her good influence, coupled with the healing effect of his love and care for Eppie, that enabled Silas to see light at last.

Mr. Macey was the village oracle. Parish clerk and

choir leader he had been for more than forty years, and when increasing age necessitated the employment of an assistant, he clipped the wings of aspiring youth and suffered the unfortunate deputy to entertain no illusions either about the benefit of a higher education in general, or of his own gifts and graces in particular. He knew all the village legends, and delighted to repeat them in the evenings to an admiring audience at the Rainbow. He had a firm belief in supernatural beings, and was at first inclined to accept the view that Silas Marner had dealings with the Evil One. But the wretched, depressed condition of the weaver after the robbery convinced him that he was no worse than his neighbours. The old gentleman was, however, not very tactful in expressing this opinion to Silas Marner. One who looked 'as scared as a rabbit', he said, could not be very deep or designing; and just as toads were harmless enough in spite of their queer appearance, so it was probable that there was little harm in Silas, although he did look like 'a bald-faced calf'. His advice to the weaver was to keep up his spirits and to go to church, chiefly, apparently, that he might hear Mr. Macey say 'Amen'. Altogether Mr. Macey's attempts to comfort Silas 'smacked of a mingled soil'; but in spite of his egotism he was not an unkindly old man. He was among the first to influence village opinion in favour of Silas, and it was with as much pleasure as pride that he saw his prophecy, that the weaver would get his money back, fulfilled.

The other villagers must be dismissed with a few words. Mr. Snell, the landlord, who used to hold the balance between contending parties at the village inn as much in the interest of the Rainbow as in that of the preservation of peace, and in any dispute was of opinion that there was much to be said on both sides; Ben Winthrop, who loved his quart pot and his joke, and was sometimes a trial to his patient wife, Dolly; Mr. Dowlas, the farrier, 'the negative spirit' of the company at the Rainbow, who stoutly maintained the



choir leader he had been for more than forty years, and when increasing age necessitated the employment of an assistant, he clipped the wings of aspiring youth and suffered the unfortunate deputy to entertain no illusions either about the benefit of a higher education in general, or of his own gifts and graces in particular. He knew all the village legends, and delighted to repeat them in the evenings to an admiring audience at the Rainbow. He had a firm belief in supernatural beings, and was at first inclined to accept the view that Silas Marner had dealings with the Evil One. But the wretched, depressed condition of the weaver after the robbery convinced him that he was no worse than his neighbours. The old gentleman was, however, not very tactful in expressing this opinion to Silas Marner. One who looked 'as scared as a rabbit', he said, could not be very deep or designing; and just as toads were harmless enough in spite of their queer appearance, so it was probable that there was little harm in Silas, although he did look like 'a bald-faced calf'. His advice to the weaver was to keep up his spirits and to go to church, chiefly, apparently, that he might hear Mr. Macey say 'Amen'. Altogether Mr. Macey's attempts to comfort Silas 'smacked of a mingled soil'; but in spite of his egotism he was not an unkindly old man. He was among the first to influence village opinion in favour of Silas, and it was with as much pleasure as pride that he saw his prophecy, that the weaver would get his money back, fulfilled.

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non-existence of ghosts in spite of Mr. Snell's suggestion that perhaps 'he hadn't got the smell for them'; the butcher, a jolly, smiling, red-haired man with a husky treble voice, all for peace and quietness, and not easily to be entrapped into a rash statement or a quarrel; Jem Rodney the poacher, and Tookey, the much oppressed 'deputy', complete the list.





# SILAS MARNER

THE WEAVER OF RAVENHOF



PART I

CHAPTER I

IN the days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses—and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak—there might be seen, in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny country-folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race: The shepherd's dog barked fiercely when one of these alien-looking men appeared on the upland, dark against the early winter sunset; for what dog likes a figure bent under a heavy bag?—and these pale men rarely stirred abroad without that mysterious burden. The shepherd himself, though he had good reason to believe that the bag held nothing but flaxen thread, or else the long rolls of strong linen spun from that thread, was not quite sure that this trade of weaving, indispensable though it was, could be carried on entirely without the help of the Evil One. In that far-off time superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted, or even intermittent and occasional merely, like the visits of the pedlar or the knife-grinder. No one knew where wandering men had their homes or their origin; and how was a man to be explained unless you at least knew somebody who knew his father and mother? To the peasants of old times, the world outside their own direct experience was a region of vagueness and mystery: to their untravelled

thought a state of wandering was a conception as dim as the winter life of the swallows that came back with the spring ; and even a settler, if he came from distant parts, hardly ever ceased to be viewed with a remnant of distrust, which would have prevented any surprise if a long course of inoffensive conduct on his part had ended in the commission of a crime ; especially if he had any reputation for knowledge, or showed any skill in handicraft. All cleverness, whether in the rapid use of that difficult instrument the tongue, or in some other art unfamiliar to villagers, was in itself suspicious : honest folks, born and bred in a visible manner, were mostly not overwise or clever—at least, not beyond such a matter as knowing the signs of the weather ; and the process by which rapidity and dexterity of any kind were acquired was so wholly hidden, that they partook of the nature of conjuring. In this way it came to pass that those scattered linen-weavers—emigrants from the town into the country—were to the last regarded as aliens by their rustic neighbours, and usually contracted the eccentric habits which belong to a state of loneliness.

In the early years of this century, such a linen-weaver, named Silas Marner, worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the nutty hedgerows near the village of Raveloe, and not far from the edge of a deserted stone-pit. The questionable sound of Silas's loom, so unlike the natural cheerful trotting of the winnowing machine, or the simple rhythm of the flail, had a half-fearful fascination for the Raveloe boys, who would often leave off their nutting or birds'-nesting to peep in at the window of the stone cottage, counterbalancing a certain awe at the mysterious action of the loom, by a pleasant sense of scornful superiority, drawn from the mockery of its alternating noises, along with the bent, tread-mill attitude of the weaver. But sometimes it happened that Marner, pausing to adjust an irregularity in his thread, became aware of the small scoundrels, and, though chary of his time, he liked their intrusion so ill that he would descend from his

loom, and, opening the door, would fix on them a gaze that was always enough to make them take to their legs in terror. For how was it possible to believe that those large brown protuberant eyes in Silas Marner's pale face really saw nothing very distinctly that was not close to them, and not rather that their dreadful stare could dart cramp, or rickets, or a wry mouth at any boy who happened to be in the rear? They had, perhaps, heard their fathers and mothers hint that Silas Marner could cure folks' rheumatism if he had a mind, and add, still more darkly, that if you could only speak the devil fair enough, he might save you the cost of the doctor. Such strange lingering echoes of the old demon-worship might perhaps even now be caught by the diligent listener among the grey-haired peasantry; for the rude mind with difficulty associates the idea of power and benignity. A shadowy conception of power that by much persuasion can be induced to refrain from inflicting harm, is the shape most easily taken by the sense of the Invisible in the minds of men who have always been pressed close by primitive wants, and to whom a life of hard toil has never been illuminated by any enthusiastic religious faith. To them pain and mishap present a far wider range of possibilities than gladness and enjoyment: their imagination is almost barren of the images that feed desire and hope, but is all overgrown by recollections that are a perpetual pasture to fear. 'Is there anything you can fancy that you would like to eat?' I once said to an old labouring man, who was in his last illness, and who had refused all the food his wife had offered him. 'No,' he answered, 'I've never been used to nothing but common victual, and I can't eat that.' Experience had bred no fancies in him that could raise the phantasm of appetite.

And Raveloe was a village where many of the old echoes lingered, undrowned by new voices. Not that it was one of those barren parishes lying on the outskirts of civilization—inhabited by meagre sheep and thinly-scattered shepherds: on the contrary, it lay in the rich-

central plain of what we are pleased to call Merry England, and held farms which, speaking from a spiritual point of view, paid highly-desirable tithes. But it was nestled in a snug well-wooded hollow, quite an hour's journey on horseback from any turnpike, where it was never reached by the vibrations of the coach-horn, or of public opinion. It was an important-looking village, with a fine old church and large churchyard in the heart of it, and two or three large brick-and-stone homesteads, with well-walled orchards and ornamental weathercocks, standing close upon the road, and lifting more imposing fronts than the rectory, which peeped from among the trees on the other side of the churchyard;—a village which showed at once the summits of its social life, and told the practised eye that there was no great park and manor house in the vicinity, but that there were several chiefs in Raveloe who could farm badly quite at their ease, drawing enough money from their bad farming, in those war times, to live in a rollicking fashion, and keep a jolly Christmas, Whitsun, and Easter tide.

It was fifteen years since Silas Marner had first come to Raveloe; he was then simply a pallid young man, with prominent, short-sighted brown eyes, whose appearance would have had nothing strange for people of average culture and experience, but for the villagers near whom he had come to settle it had mysterious peculiarities which corresponded with the exceptional nature of his occupation, and his advent from an unknown region called 'North'ard.' So had his way of life:—he invited no comer to step across his door-sill, and he never strolled into the village to drink a pint at the Rainbow, or to gossip at the wheel-wright's: he sought no man or woman, save for the purposes of his calling, or in order to supply himself with necessaries; and it was soon clear to the Raveloe lasses that he would never urge one of them to accept him against her will—quite as if he had heard them declare that they would never marry a dead man come to life again. This view of Marner's personality was not without another ground

than his pale face and unexampled eyes; for Jem Rodney, the mole-catcher, averred that, one evening as he was returning homeward, he saw Silas Marner leaning against a stile with a heavy bag on his back, instead of resting the bag on the stile as a man in his senses would have done; and that, on coming up to him, he saw that Marner's eyes were set like a dead man's, and he spoke to him, and shook him, and his limbs were stiff, and his hands clutched the bag as if they'd been made of iron; but just as he had made up his mind that the weaver was dead, he came all right again, like, as you might say, in the winking of an eye, and said 'Good-night,' and walked off. All this Jem swore he had seen, more by token, that it was the very day he had been mole-catching on Squire Cass's land, down by the old saw-pit. Some said Marner must have been in a 'fit,' a word which seemed to explain things otherwise incredible; but the argumentative Mr. Macey, clerk of the parish, shook his head, and asked if anybody was ever known to go off in a fit and not fall down. A fit was a stroke, wasn't it? and it was in the nature of a stroke to partly take away the use of a man's limbs and throw him on the parish, if he'd got no children to look to. No, no; it was no stroke that would let a man stand on his legs, like a horse between the shafts, and then walk off as soon as you can say 'Gee!' But there might be such a thing as a man's soul being loose from his body, and going out and in, like a bird out of its nest and back; and that was how folks got over-wise, for they went to school in this shell-less state to those who could teach them more than their neighbours could learn with their five-senses and the parson. And where did Master Marner get his knowledge of herbs from—and charms, too, if he liked to give them away? Jem Rodney's story was no more than what might have been expected by anybody who had seen how Marner had cured Sally Oates, and made her sleep like a baby, when her heart had been beating enough to burst her body, for two months and more, while she had been under the doctor's care. He might cure more folks if

central plain of what we are pleased to call Merry England, and held farms which, speaking from a spiritual point of view, paid highly-desirable tithes. But it was nestled in a snug well-wooded hollow, quite an hour's journey on horseback from any turnpike, where it was never reached by the vibrations of the coach-horn, or of public opinion. It was an important-looking village, with a fine old church and large churchyard in the heart of it, and two or three large brick-and-stone homesteads, with well-walled orchards and ornamental weathercocks, standing close upon the road, and lifting more imposing fronts than the rectory, which peeped from among the trees on the other side of the churchyard;—a village which showed at once the summits of its social life, and told the practised eye that there was no great park and manor house in the vicinity, but that there were several chiefs in Raveloe who could farm badly quite at their ease, drawing enough money from their bad farming, in those war times, to live in a rollicking fashion, and keep a jolly Christmas, Whitsun, and Easter tide.

It was fifteen years since Silas Marner had first come to Raveloe; he was then simply a pallid young man, with prominent, short-sighted brown eyes, whose appearance would have had nothing strange for people of average culture and experience, but for the villagers near whom he had come to settle it had mysterious peculiarities which corresponded with the exceptional nature of his occupation, and his advent from an unknown region called 'North'ard.' So had his way of life:—he invited no comers to step across his door-sill, and he never strolled into the village to drink a pint at the Rainbow, or to gossip at the wheel-wright's: he sought no man or woman, save for the purposes of his calling, or in order to supply himself with necessaries; and it was soon clear to the Raveloe lasses that he would never urge one of them to accept him against her will—quite as if he had heard them declare that they would never marry a dead man come to life again. This view of Marner's personality was not without another ground

than his pale face and unexampled eyes; for Jem Rodney, the mole-catcher, averred that, one evening as he was returning homeward, he saw Silas Marner leaning against a stile with a heavy bag on his back, instead of resting the bag on the stile as a man in his senses would have done; and that, on coming up to him, he saw that Marner's eyes were set like a dead man's, and he spoke to him, and shook him, and his limbs were stiff, and his hands clutched the bag as if they'd been made of iron; but just as he had made up his mind that the weaver was dead, he came all right again, like, as you might say, in the winking of an eye, and said 'Good-night,' and walked off. All this Jem swore he had seen, more by token, that it was the very day he had been mole-catching on Squire Cass's land, down by the old saw-pit. Some said Marner must have been in a 'fit,' a word which seemed to explain things otherwise incredible; but the argumentative Mr. Macey, clerk of the parish, shook his head, and asked if anybody was ever known to go off in a fit and not fall down. A fit was a stroke, wasn't it? and it was in the nature of a stroke to partly take away the use of a man's limbs and throw him on the parish, if he'd got no children to look to. No, no; it was no stroke that would let a man stand on his legs, like a horse between the shafts, and then walk off as soon as you can say 'Gee!' But there might be such a thing as a man's soul being loose from his body, and going out and in, like a bird out of its nest and back; and that was how folks got over-wise, for they went to school in this shell-less state to those who could teach them more than their neighbours could learn with their five senses and the parson. And where did Master Marner get his knowledge of herbs from—and charms, too, if he liked to give them away? Jem Rodney's story was no more than what might have been expected by anybody who had seen how Marner had cured Sally Oates, and made her sleep like a baby, when her heart had been beating enough to burst her body, for two months and more, while she had been under the doctor's care. He might cure more folks if



over-severity towards weaker brethren, and to be so dazzled by his own light as to hold himself wiser than his teachers. But whatever blemishes others might discern in William, to his friend's mind he was faultless ; for Marner had one of those impressible self-doubting natures, which, at an inexperienced age, admire imperativeness and lean on contradiction. The expression of trusting simplicity in Marner's face, heightened by that absence of special observation, that defenceless, deer-like gaze which belongs to large prominent eyes, was strongly contrasted by the self-complacent suppression of inward triumph that lurked in the narrow slanting eyes and compressed lips of William Dane. One of the most frequent topics of conversation between the two friends was Assurance of salvation : Silas confessed that he could never arrive at anything higher than hope mingled with fear, and listened with longing wonder when William declared that he had possessed unshaken assurance ever since, in the period of his conversion, he had dreamed that he saw the words ' calling and election sure ' standing by themselves on a white page in the open Bible. Such colloquies have occupied many a pair of pale-faced weavers, whose unnurtured souls have been like young winged things, fluttering forsaken in the twilight.

It had seemed to the unsuspecting Silas that the friendship had suffered no chill even from his formation of another attachment of a closer kind. For some months he had been engaged to a young servant-woman, waiting only for a little increase to their mutual savings in order to their marriage ; and it was a great delight to him that Sarah did not object to William's occasional presence in their Sunday interviews. It was at this point in their history that Silas's cataleptic fit occurred during the prayer-meeting ; and amidst the various queries and expressions of interest addressed to him by his fellow-members, William's suggestion alone jarred with the general sympathy towards a brother thus singled out for special dealings. He observed that, to him, this trance looked more like a

visitation of Satan than a proof of divine favour, and exhorted his friend to see that he hid no accursed thing within his soul. Silas, feeling bound to accept rebuke and admonition as a brotherly office, felt no resentment, but only pain, at his friend's doubts concerning him ; and to this was soon added some anxiety at the perception that Sarah's manner towards him began to exhibit a strange fluctuation between an effort at an increased manifestation of regard and involuntary signs of shrinking and dislike. He asked her if she wished to break off their engagement ; but she denied this : their engagement was known to the church, and had been recognized in the prayer-meetings ; it could not be broken off without strict investigation, and Sarah could render no reason that would be sanctioned by the feeling of the community. At this time the senior deacon was taken dangerously ill, and, being a childless widower, he was tended night and day by some of the younger brethren or sisters. Silas frequently took his turn in the night-watching with William, the one relieving the other at two in the morning. The old man, contrary to expectation, seemed to be on the way to recovery, when one night Silas, sitting up by his bedside, observed that his usually audible breathing had ceased. The candle was burning low, and he had to lift it to see the patient's face distinctly. Examination convinced him that the deacon was dead—had been dead some time, for the limbs were rigid. Silas asked himself if he had been asleep, and looked at the clock : it was already four in the morning. How was it that William had not come ? In much anxiety he went to seek for help, and soon there were several friends assembled in the house, the minister among them, while Silas went away to his work, wishing he could have met William to know the reason of his non-appearance. But at six o'clock, as he was thinking of going to seek his friend, William came, and with him the minister. They came to summon him to Lantern Yard, to meet the church members there ; and to his inquiry concerning the cause of the summons the only reply was, ' You

rose to depart, he went towards William Dane and said, in a voice shaken by agitation—

‘The last time I remember using my knife, was when I took it out to cut a strap for you. I don’t remember putting it in my pocket again. *You* stole the money, and you have woven a plot to lay the sin at my door. But you may prosper, for all that: there is no just God that governs the earth righteously, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent.’

There was a general shudder at this blasphemy.

William said meekly, ‘I leave our brethren to judge whether this is the voice of Satan or not. I can do nothing but pray for you, Silas.’

Poor Marner went out with that despair in his soul—that shaken trust in God and man, which is little short of madness to a loving nature. In the bitterness of his wounded spirit, he said to himself, ‘*She* will cast me off too.’ And he reflected that, if she did not believe the testimony against him, her whole faith must be upset, as his was. To people accustomed to reason about the forms in which their religious feeling has incorporated itself, it is difficult to enter into that simple, untaught state of mind in which the form and the feeling have never been severed by an act of reflection. We are apt to think it inevitable that a man in Marner’s position should have begun to question the validity of an appeal to the divine judgement by drawing lots; but to him this would have been an effort of independent thought such as he had never known; and he must have made the effort at a moment when all his energies were turned into the anguish of disappointed faith. If there is an angel who records the sorrows of men as well as their sins, he knows how many and deep are the sorrows that spring from false ideas for which no man is culpable.

Marner went home, and for a whole day sat alone, stunned by despair, without any impulse to go to Sarah and attempt to win her belief in his innocence. The second day he took refuge from benumbing unbelief, by getting into his loom and working away as usual; and before many hours were past, the minister and

one of the deacons came to him with the message from Sarah, that she held her engagement to him at an end. Silas received the message mutely, and then turned away from the messengers to work at his loom again. In little more than a month from that time, Sarah was married to William Dane; and not long afterwards it was known to the brethren in Lantern Yard that Silas Marner had departed from the town.

## CHAPTER II.

**EVEN** people whose lives have been made various by learning, sometimes find it hard to keep a fast hold on their habitual views of life, on their faith in the Invisible—nay, on the sense that their past joys and sorrows are a real experience, when they are suddenly transported to a new land, where the beings around them know nothing of their history, and share none of their ideas—where their mother earth shows another lap, and human life has other forms than those on which their souls have been nourished. Minds that have been unhinged from their old faith and love, have perhaps sought this Lethæan influence of exile, in which the past becomes dreamy because its symbols have all vanished, and the present too is dreamy because it is linked with no memories. But even *their* experience may hardly enable them thoroughly to imagine what was the effect on a simple weaver like Silas Marner, when he left his own country and people and came to settle in Raveloe. Nothing could be more unlike his native town, set within sight of the widespread hill-sides, than this low, wooded region, where he felt hidden even from the heavens by the screening trees and hedgerows. There was nothing here, when he rose in the deep morning quiet and looked out on the dewy brambles and rank tufted grass, that seemed to have any relation with that life centering in Lantern Yard, which had once been to him the altar-place of high dispensations. The

whitewashed walls ; the little pews where well-known figures entered with a subdued rustling, and where first one well-known voice and then another, pitched in a peculiar key of petition, uttered phrases at once occult and familiar, like the amulet worn on the heart ; the pulpit where the minister delivered unquestioned doctrine, and swayed to and fro, and handled the book in a long accustomed manner ; the very pauses between the couplets of the hymn, as it was given out, and the recurrent swell of voices in song : these things had been the channel of divine influences to Marner—they were the fostering home of his religious emotions—they were Christianity and God's kingdom upon earth. A weaver who finds hard words in his hymn-book knows nothing of abstractions ; as the little child knows nothing of parental love, but only knows one face and one lap towards which it stretches its arms for refuge and nurture.

And what could be more unlike that Lantern Yard world than the world in Raveloe ?—orchards looking lazy with neglected plenty ; the large church in the wide churchyard, which men gazed at lounging at their own doors in service-time ; the purple-faced farmers jogging along the lanes or turning in at the Rainbow ; homesteads, where men supped heavily and slept in the light of the evening hearth, and where women seemed to be laying up a stock of linen for the life to come. There were no lips in Raveloe from which a word could fall that would stir Silas Marner's benumbed faith to a sense of pain. In the early ages of the world, we know, it was believed that each territory was inhabited and ruled by its own divinities, so that a man could cross the bordering heights and be out of the reach of his native gods, whose presence was confined to the streams and the groves and the hills among which he had lived from his birth. And poor Silas was vaguely conscious of something not unlike the feeling of primitive men, when they fled thus, in fear or in sullenness, from the face of an unpropitious deity. It seemed to him that the Power in which he had vainly trusted among the streets and in the prayer-meetings, was very far away

from this land in which he had taken refuge, where men lived in careless abundance, knowing and needing nothing of that trust, which, for him, had been turned to bitterness. The little light he possessed spread its beams so narrowly, that frustrated belief was a curtain broad enough to create for him the blackness of night.

His first movement after the shock had been to work in his loom ; and he went on with this unremittingly, never asking himself why, now he was come to Raveloe, he worked far on into the night to finish the tale of Mrs. Osgood's table-linen sooner than she expected—without contemplating beforehand the money she would put into his hand for the work. He seemed to weave, like the spider, from pure impulse, without reflection. Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends in this way to become an end in itself, and so to bridge over the loveless chasms of his life. Silas's hand satisfied itself with throwing the shuttle, and his eye with seeing the little squares in the cloth complete themselves under his effort. Then there were the calls of hunger ; and Silas, in his solitude, had to provide his own breakfast, dinner, and supper, to fetch his own water from the well, and put his own kettle on the fire ; and all these immediate promptings helped, along with the weaving, to reduce his life to the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect. He hated the thought of the past ; there was nothing that called out his love and fellowship toward the strangers he had come amongst ; and the future was all dark, for there was no Unseen Love that cared for him. Thought was arrested by utter bewilderment, now its old narrow pathway was closed, and affection seemed to have died under the bruise that had fallen on its keenest nerves.

But at last Mrs. Osgood's table-linen was finished, and Silas was paid in gold. His earnings in his native town, where he worked for a wholesale dealer, had been after a lower rate ; he had been paid weekly, and of his weekly earnings a large proportion had gone to objects of piety and charity. Now, for the first time in his life, he had five bright guineas put into his hand ; no man

expected a share of them, and he loved no man that he should offer him a share. But what were the guineas to him who saw no vista beyond countless days of weaving? It was needless for him to ask that, for it was pleasant to him to feel them in his palm, and look at their bright faces, which were all his own: it was another element of life, like the weaving and the satisfaction of hunger, subsisting quite aloof from the life of belief and love from which he had been cut off. The weaver's hand had known the touch of hard-won money even before the palm had grown to its full breadth; for twenty years, mysterious money had stood to him as the symbol of earthly good, and the immediate object of toil. He had seemed to love it little in the years when every penny had its purpose for him; for he loved the *purpose* then. But now, when all purpose was gone, that habit of looking towards the money and grasping it with a sense of fulfilled effort made a loam that was deep enough for the seeds of desire; and as Silas walked homeward across the fields in the twilight, he drew out the money, and thought it was brighter in the gathering gloom.

About this time an incident happened which seemed to open a possibility of some fellowship with his neighbours. One day, taking a pair of shoes to be mended, he saw the cobbler's wife seated by the fire, suffering from the terrible symptoms of heart-disease and dropsy, which he had witnessed as the precursors of his mother's death. He felt a rush of pity at the mingled sight and remembrance, and, recalling the relief his mother had found from a simple preparation of foxglove, he promised Sally Oates to bring her something that would ease her, since the doctor did her no good. In this office of charity, Silas felt, for the first time since he had come to Raveloe, a sense of unity between his past and present life, which might have been the beginning of his rescue from the insect-like existence into which his nature had shrunk. But Sally Oates's disease had raised her into a personage of much interest and importance among the neighbours, and the fact of her

having found relief from drinking Silas Marner's 'stuff' became a matter of general discourse. When Doctor Kimble gave physic, it was natural that it should have an effect; but when a weaver, who came from nobody knew where, worked wonders with a bottle of brown waters, the occult character of the process was evident. Such a sort of thing had not been known since the Wise Woman at Tarley died; and she had charms as well as 'stuff': everybody went to her when their children had fits. Silas Marner must be a person of the same sort, for how did he know what would bring back Sally Oates's breath, if he didn't know a fine sight more than that? The Wise Woman had words that she muttered to herself, so that you couldn't hear what they were, and if she tied a bit of red thread round the child's toe the while, it would keep off the water in the head. There were women in Raveloe, at that present time, who had worn one of the Wise Woman's little bags round their necks, and, in consequence, had never had an idiot child, as Ann Coulter had. Silas Marner could very likely do as much, and more; and now it was all clear how he should have come from unknown parts, and be so 'comical-looking.' But Sally Oates must mind and not tell the doctor, for he would be sure to set his face against Marner: he was always angry about the Wise Woman, and used to threaten those who went to her that they should have none of his help any more.

Silas now found himself and his cottage suddenly beset by mothers who wanted him to charm away the hooping-cough, or bring back the milk, and by men who wanted stuff against the rheumatics or the knots in the hands; and, to secure themselves against a refusal, the applicants brought silver in their palms. Silas might have driven a profitable trade in charms as well as in his small list of drugs; but money on this condition was no temptation to him: he had never known an impulse towards falsity, and he drove one after another away with growing irritation, for the news of him as a wise man had spread even to Tarley, and it



was long before people ceased to take long walks for the sake of asking his aid. But the hope in his wisdom was at length changed into dread, for no one believed him when he said he knew no charms and could work no cures, and every man and woman who had an accident or a new attack after applying to him, set the misfortune down to Master Marner's ill-will and irritated glances. Thus it came to pass that his movement of pity towards Sally Oates, which had given him a transient sense of brotherhood, heightened the repulsion between him and his neighbours, and made his isolation more complete.

Gradually the guineas, the crowns, and the half-crowns, grew to a heap, and Marner drew less and less for his own wants, trying to solve the problem of keeping himself strong enough to work sixteen hours a-day on as small an outlay as possible. Have not men, shut up in solitary imprisonment, found an interest in marking the moments by straight strokes of a certain length on the wall, until the growth of the sum of straight strokes, arranged in triangles, has become a mastering purpose? Do we not wile away moments of inanity or fatigued waiting by repeating some trivial movement or sound, until the repetition has bred a want, which is incipient habit? That will help us to understand how the love of accumulating money grows an absorbing passion in men whose imaginations, even in the very beginning of their hoard, showed them no purpose beyond it. Marner wanted the heaps of ten to grow into a square, and then into a larger square; and every added guinea, while it was itself a satisfaction, bred a new desire. In this strange world, made a hopeless riddle to him, he might, if he had had a less intense nature, have sat weaving, weaving—looking towards the end of his pattern, or towards the end of his web, till he forgot the riddle, and everything else but his immediate sensations; but the money had come to mark off his weaving into periods, and the money not only grew, but it remained with him. He began to think it was conscious of him, as his loom was, and he

would on no account have exchanged those coins, which had become his familiars, for other coins with unknown faces. He handled them, he counted them, till their form and colour were like the satisfaction of a thirst to him ; but it was only in the night, when his work was done, that he drew them out to enjoy their companionship. He had taken up some bricks in his floor underneath his loom, and here he had made a hole in which he set the iron pot that contained his guineas and silver coins, covering the bricks with sand whenever he replaced them. Not that the idea of being robbed presented itself often or strongly to his mind : hoarding was common in country districts in those days ; there were old labourers in the parish of Raveloe who were known to have their savings by them, probably inside their flock beds ; but their rustic neighbours, though not all of them as honest as their ancestors in the days of King Alfred, had not imaginations bold enough to lay a plan of burglary. How could they have spent the money in their own village without betraying themselves ? They would be obliged to 'run away'—a course as dark and dubious as a balloon journey.

So, year after year, Silas Marner had lived in this solitude, his guineas rising in the iron pot, and his life narrowing and hardening itself more and more into a mere pulsation of desire and satisfaction that had no relation to any other being. His life had reduced itself to the mere functions of weaving and hoarding, without any contemplation of an end towards which the functions tended. The same sort of process has perhaps been undergone by wiser men, when they have been cut off from faith and love—only, instead of a loom and a heap of guineas, they have had some erudite research, some ingenious project, or some well-knit theory. Strangely Marner's face and figure shrank and bent themselves into a constant mechanical relation to the objects of his life, so that he produced the same sort of impression as a handle or a crooked tube, which has no meaning standing apart. The prominent eyes that used to look trusting and dreamy, now looked as if they had been

made to see only one kind of thing that was very small, like tiny grain, for which they hunted everywhere: and he was so withered and yellow, that, though he was not yet forty, the children always called him 'Old Master Marner.'

Yet even in this stage of withering a little incident happened, which showed that the sap of affection was not all gone. It was one of his daily tasks to fetch his water from a well a couple of fields off, and for this purpose, ever since he came to Raveloe, he had had a brown earthenware pot, which he held as his most precious utensil, among the very few conveniences he had granted himself. It had been his companion for twelve years, always standing on the same spot, always lending its handle to him in the early morning, so that its form had an expression for him of willing helpfulness, and the impress of its handle on his palm gave a satisfaction mingled with that of having the fresh clear water. One day as he was returning from the well, he stumbled against the step of the stile, and his brown pot, falling with force against the stones that overarched the ditch below him, was broken in three pieces. Silas picked up the pieces and carried them home with grief in his heart. The brown pot could never be of use to him any more, but he stuck the bits together and propped the ruin in its old place for a memorial.

This is the history of Silas Marner until the fifteenth year after he came to Raveloe. The livelong day he sat in his loom, his ear filled with its monotony, his eyes bent close down on the slow growth of sameness in the brownish web, his muscles moving with such even repetition that their pause seemed almost as much a constraint as the holding of his breath. But at night came his revelry: at night he closed his shutters, and made fast his doors, and drew out his gold. Long ago the heap of coins had become too large for the iron pot to hold them, and he had made for them two thick leather bags, which wasted no room in their resting-place, but lent themselves flexibly to every corner. How the guineas shone as they came pouring out of the dark

leather mouths ! The silver bore no large proportion in amount to the gold, because the long pieces of linen which formed his chief work were always partly paid for in gold, and out of the silver he supplied his own bodily wants, choosing always the shillings and sixpences to spend in this way. He loved the guineas best, but he would not change the silver—the crowns and half-crowns that were his own earnings, begotten by his labour ; he loved them all. He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them ; then he counted them and set them up in regular piles, and felt their rounded outline between his thumb and fingers, and thought fondly of the guineas that were only half-earned by the work in his loom, as if they had been unborn children—thought of the guineas that were coming slowly through the coming years, through all his life, which spread far away before him, the end quite hidden by countless days of weaving. No wonder his thoughts were still with his loom and his money when he made his journeys through the fields and the lanes to fetch and carry home his work, so that his steps never wandered to the hedge-banks and the lane-side in search of the once familiar herbs : these too belonged to the past, from which his life had shrunk away, like a rivulet that has sunk far down from the grassy fringe of its old breadth into a little shivering thread, that cuts a groove for itself in the barren sand.

But about the Christmas of that fifteenth year, a second great change came over Marner's life, and his history became blent in a singular manner with the life of his neighbours.

### CHAPTER III.

THE greatest man in Raveloe was Squire Cass, who lived in the large red house, with the handsome flight of stone steps in front and the high stables behind it, nearly opposite the church. He was only one among

several landed parishioners, but he alone was honoured with the title of squire ; for though Mr. Osgood's family was also understood to be of timeless origin—the Raveloe imagination having never ventured back to that fearful blank when there were no Osgoods—still, he merely owned the farm he occupied ; whereas Squire Cass had a tenant or two, who complained of the game to him quite as if he had been a lord.

It was still that glorious war-time which was felt to be a peculiar favour of Providence towards the landed interest, and the fall of prices had not yet come to carry the race of small squires and yeomen down that road to ruin for which extravagant habits and bad husbandry were plentifully anointing their wheels. I am speaking now in relation to Raveloe and the parishes that resembled it ; for our old-fashioned country life had many different aspects, as all life must have when it is spread over a various surface, and breathed on variously by multitudinous currents, from the winds of heaven to the thoughts of men, which are for ever moving and crossing each other, with incalculable results. Raveloe lay low among the bushy trees and the rutted lanes, aloof from the currents of industrial energy and Puritan earnestness : the rich ate and drank freely, and accepted gout and apoplexy as things that ran mysteriously in respectable families, and the poor thought that the rich were entirely in the right of it to lead a jolly life ; besides, their feasting caused a multiplication of orts, which were the heirlooms of the poor. Betty Jay scented the boiling of Squire Cass's hams, but her longing was arrested by the unctuous liquor in which they were boiled ; and when the seasons brought round the great merrymakings, they were regarded on all hands as a fine thing for the poor. For the Raveloe feasts were like the rounds of beef—and the barrels of ale—they were on a large scale, and lasted a good while, especially in the winter-time. When ladies had packed up their best gowns and top-knots in bandboxes, and had incurred the risk of fording streams on pillions with the precious burden in rainy or snowy weather, when

there was no knowing how high the water would rise, it was not to be supposed that they looked forward to a brief pleasure. On this ground it was always contrived in the dark seasons, when there was little work to be done, and the hours were long, that several neighbours should keep open house in succession. When Squire Cass's standing dishes diminished in plenty and freshness, his guests had nothing to do but to walk a little higher up the village to Mr. Osgood's, at the Orchards, and they found hams and chinees uncut, pork-pies with the scent of the fire in them, spun butter in all its freshness—everything, in fact, that appetites at leisure could desire, in perhaps greater perfection, though not in greater abundance, than at Squire Cass's.

For the Squire's wife had died long ago, and the Red House was without that presence of the wife and mother which is the fountain of wholesome love and fear in parlour and kitchen; and this helped to account not only for there being more profusion than finished excellence in the holiday provisions, but also for the frequency with which the proud Squire condescended to preside in the parlour of the Rainbow rather than under the shadow of his own dark wainscot; perhaps, also, for the fact that his sons had turned out rather ill. Raveloe was not a place where moral censure was severe, but it was thought a weakness in the Squire that he had kept all his sons at home in idleness; and though some licence was to be allowed to young men whose fathers could afford it, people shook their heads at the courses of the second son, Dunstan, commonly called Dunsey Cass, whose taste for swopping and betting might turn out to be a sowing of something worse than wild oats. To be sure, the neighbours said, it was no matter what became of Dunsey—a spiteful jeering fellow, who seemed to enjoy his drink the more when other people went dry—always provided that his doings did not bring trouble on a family like Squire Cass's, with a monument in the church, and tankards older than King George. But it would be a thousand pities if Mr. Godfrey, the eldest, a fine, open-faced, good-natured

young man, who was to come into the land some day, should take to going along the same road as his brother, as he had seemed to do of late. If he went on in that way, he would lose Miss Nancy Lammeter; for it was well known that she had looked very shyly on him ever since last Whitsuntide twelvemonth, when there was so much talk about his being away from home days and days together. There was something wrong, more than common—that was quite clear; for Mr. Godfrey didn't look half so fresh-coloured and open as he used to do. At one time everybody was saying, what a handsome couple he and Miss Nancy Lammeter would make! and if she could come to be mistress at the Red House there would be a fine change, for the Lammeters had been brought up in that way, that they never suffered a pinch of salt to be wasted, and yet everybody in their household had of the best, according to his place. Such a daughter-in-law would be a saving to the old Squire, if she never brought a penny to her fortune, for it was to be feared that, notwithstanding his incomings, there were more holes in his pocket than the one where he put his own hand in. But if Mr. Godfrey didn't turn over a new leaf, he might say 'Good-bye' to Miss Nancy Lammeter.

It was the once hopeful Godfrey who was standing, with his hands in his side-pockets and his back to the fire, in the dark wainscoted parlour, one late November afternoon, in that fifteenth year of Silas Marner's life at Raveloe. The fading grey light fell dimly on the walls decorated with guns, whips, and foxes' brushes, on coats and hats flung on the chairs, on tankards sending forth a scent of flat ale, and on a half-choked fire, with pipes propped up in the chimney-corners: signs of a domestic life destitute of any hallowing charm, with which the look of gloomy vexation on Godfrey's blond face was in sad accordance. He seemed to be waiting and listening for some one's approach, and presently the sound of a heavy step, with an accompanying whistle, was heard across the large empty entrance-hall.

The door opened, and a thick-set, heavy-looking young man entered, with the flushed face and the gratuitously elated bearing which mark the first stage of intoxication. It was Dunsey, and at the sight of him Godfrey's face parted with some of the gloom to take on the more active expression of hatred. The handsome brown spaniel that lay on the hearth retreated under the chair in the chimney-corner.

'Well, Master Godfrey, what do you want with me?' said Dunsey, in a mocking tone. 'You're my elders and betters, you know; I was obliged to come when you sent for me.'

'Why, this is what I want—and just shake yourself sober and listen, will you?' said Godfrey, savagely. He had himself been drinking more than was good for him, trying to turn his gloom into uncalculating anger. 'I want to tell you, I must hand over that rent of Fowler's to the Squire, or else tell him I gave it you; for he's threatening to distrain for it, and it'll all be out soon, whether I tell him or not. He said, just now, before he went out, he should send word to Cox to distrain, if Fowler didn't come and pay up his arrears this week. The Squire's short o' cash, and in no humour to stand any nonsense; and you know what he threatened, if ever he found you making away with his money again. So, see and get the money, and pretty quickly, will you?'

'Oh!' said Dunsey, sneeringly, coming nearer to his brother and looking in his face. 'Suppose, now, you get the money yourself, and save me the trouble, eh? Since you was so kind as to hand it over to me, you'll not refuse me the kindness to pay it back for me: it was your brotherly love made you do it, you know.'

Godfrey bit his lips and clenched his fist. 'Don't come near me with that look, else I'll knock you down.'

'Oh, no, you won't,' said Dunsey, turning away on his heel, however. 'Because I'm such a good-natured brother, you know. I might get you turned out of house and home, and cut off with a shilling any day. I might tell the Squire how his handsome son was



married to that nice young woman, Molly Farren, and was very unhappy because he couldn't live with his drunken wife, and I should slip into your place as comfortable as could be. But, you see, I don't do it—I'm so easy and good-natured. You'll take any trouble for me. You'll get the hundred pounds for me—I know you will.'

'How can I get the money?' said Godfrey, quivering. 'I haven't a shilling to bless myself with. And it's a lie that you'd slip into my place: you'd get yourself turned out too, that's all. For if you begin telling tales, I'll follow. Bob's my father's favourite—you know that very well. He'd only think himself well rid of you.'

'Never mind,' said Dunsey, nodding his head sideways as he looked out of the window. 'It 'ud be very pleasant to me to go in your company—you're such a handsome brother, and we've always been so fond of quarrelling with one another, I shouldn't know what to do without you. But you'd like better for us both to stay at home together; I know you would. So you'll manage to get that little sum o' money, and I'll bid you good-bye, though I'm sorry to part.'

Dunstan was moving off, but Godfrey rushed after him and seized him by the arm, saying, with an oath.

'I tell you, I have no money: I can get no money.'

'Borrow of old Kimble.'

'I tell you, he won't lend me any more, and I shan't ask him.'

'Well then, sell Wildfire.'

'Yes, that's easy talking. I must have the money directly.'

'Well, you've only got to ride him to the hunt to-morrow. There'll be Bryce and Keating there, for sure. You'll get more bids than one.'

'I daresay, and get back home at eight o'clock, splashed up to the chin. I'm going to Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance.'

'Oho!' said Dunsey, turning his head on one side, and trying to speak in a small mincing treble. 'And

there's sweet Miss Nancy coming ; and we shall dance with her, and promise never to be naughty again, and be taken into favour, and——'

'Hold your tongue about Miss Nancy, you fool,' said Godfrey, turning red, 'else I'll throttle you.'

'What for ?' said Dunsey, still in an artificial tone, but taking a whip from the table and beating the butt-end of it on his palm. 'You've a very good chance. I'd advise you to creep up her sleeve again : it 'ud be saving time if Molly should happen to take a drop too much laudanum some day, and make a widower of you. Miss Nancy wouldn't mind being a second, if she didn't know it. And you've got a good-natured brother, who'll keep your secret well, because you'll be so very obliging to him.'

'I'll tell you what it is,' said Godfrey, quivering, and pale again. 'My patience is pretty near at an end. If you'd a little more sharpness in you, you might know that you may urge a man a bit too far, and make one leap as easy as another. I don't know but what it is so now : I may as well tell the Squire everything myself—I should get you off my back, if I got nothing else. And, after all, he'll know some time. She's been threatening to come herself and tell him. So, don't flatter yourself that your secrecy's worth any price you choose to ask. You drain me of money till I've got nothing to pacify her with, and she'll do as she threatens some day. It's all one. I'll tell my father everything myself, and you may go to the devil.'

Dunsey perceived that he had overshot his mark, and that there was a point at which even the hesitating Godfrey might be driven into decision. But he said, with an air of unconcern,

'As you please ; but I'll have a draught of ale first.' And ringing the bell, he threw himself across two chairs, and began to rap the window-seat with the handle of his whip.

Godfrey stood, still with his back to the fire, uneasily moving his fingers among the contents of his side-pockets, and looking at the floor. That big muscular

frame of his held plenty of animal courage, but helped him to no decision when the dangers to be braved were such as could neither be knocked down nor throttled. His natural irresolution and moral cowardice were exaggerated by a position in which dreaded consequences seemed to press equally on all sides, and his irritation had no sooner provoked him to defy Dunstan and anticipate all possible betrayals, than the miseries he must bring on himself by such a step seemed more unendurable to him than the present evil. The results of confession were not contingent, they were certain; whereas betrayal was not certain. From the near vision of that certainty he fell back on suspense and vacillation with a sense of repose. The disinherited son of a small squire, equally disinclined to dig and to beg, was almost as helpless as an uprooted tree, which, by the favour of earth and sky, has grown to a handsome bulk on the spot where it first shot upward. Perhaps it would have been possible to think of digging with some cheerfulness if Nancy Lammeter were to be won on those terms; but, since he must irrevocably lose *her* as well as the inheritance, and must break every tie but the one that degraded him and left him without motive for trying to recover his better self, he could imagine no future for himself on the other side of confession but that of 'listing for a soldier'—the most desperate step, short of suicide, in the eyes of respectable families. No! he would rather trust to casualties than to his own resolve—rather go on sitting at the feast and sipping the wine he loved, though with the sword hanging over him and terror in his heart, than rush away into the cold darkness where there was no pleasure left. The utmost concession to Dunstan about the horse began to seem easy, compared with the fulfilment of his own threat. But his pride would not let him recommence the conversation otherwise than by continuing the quarrel. Dunstan was waiting for this, and took his ale in shorter draughts than usual.

'It's just like you,' Godfrey burst out, in a bitter tone, 'to talk about my selling Wildfire in that cool

way—the last thing I've got to call my own, and the best bit of horse-flesh I ever had in my life. And if you'd got a spark of pride in you, you'd be ashamed to see the stables emptied, and everybody sneering about it. But it's my belief you'd sell yourself, if it was only for the pleasure of making somebody feel he'd got a bad bargain.'

'Aye, aye,' said Dunstan, very placably, 'you do me justice, I see. You know I'm a jewel for 'ticing people into bargains. For which reason I advise you to let *me* sell Wildfire. I'd ride him to the hunt to-morrow for you, with pleasure. I shouldn't look so handsome as you in the saddle, but it's the horse they'll bid for, and not the rider.'

'Yes, I daresay,—trust my horse to you!'

'As you please,' said Dunstan, rapping the window-seat again with an air of great unconcern. 'It's *you* have got to pay Fowler's money; it's none of my business. You received the money from him when you went to Bramcote, and *you* told the Squire it wasn't paid. I'd nothing to do with that; you chose to be so obliging as give it me, that was all. If you don't want to pay the money, let it alone; it's all one to me. But I was willing to accommodate you by undertaking to sell the horse, seeing it's not convenient to you to go so far to-morrow.'

Godfrey was silent for some moments. He would have liked to spring on Dunstan, wrench the whip from his hand, and flog him to within an inch of his life; and no bodily fear could have deterred him; but he was mastered by another sort of fear, which was fed by feelings stronger even than his resentment. When he spoke again, it was in a half-conciliatory tone.

'Well, you mean no nonsense about the horse, eh? You'll sell him all fair, and hand over the money? If you don't, you know, everything'll go to smash, for I've got nothing else to trust to. And you'll have less pleasure in pulling the house over my head, when your own skull's to be broken too.'

'Aye, aye,' said Dunstan, rising, 'all right. I thought

you'd come round. I'm the fellow to bring old Bryce up to the scratch. I'll get you a hundred and twenty for him, if I get you a penny.'

'But it 'll perhaps rain cats and dogs to-morrow, as it did yesterday, and then you can't go,' said Godfrey, hardly knowing whether he wished for that obstacle or not.

'Not it,' said Dunstan. 'I'm always lucky in my weather. It might rain if you wanted to go yourself. You never hold trumps, you know—I always do. You've got the beauty, you see, and I've got the luck, so you must keep me by you for your crooked sixpence; you'll *ne-ver* get along without me.'

'Confound you, hold your tongue,' said Godfrey, impetuously. 'And take care to keep sober to-morrow, else you'll get pitched on your head coming home, and Wildfire might be the worse for it.'

'Make your tender heart easy,' said Dunstan, opening the door. 'You never knew me see double when I'd got a bargain to make; it 'ud spoil the fun. Besides, whenever I fall, I'm warranted to fall on my legs.'

With that, Dunstan slammed the door behind him, and left Godfrey to that bitter rumination on his personal circumstances which was now unbroken from day to day save by the excitement of sporting, drinking, card-playing, or the rarer and less oblivious pleasure of seeing Miss Nancy Lammeter. The subtle and varied pains springing from the higher sensibility that accompanies higher culture, are perhaps less pitiable than that dreary absense of impersonal enjoyment and consolation which leaves ruder minds to the perpetual urgent companionship of their own griefs and discontents. The lives of those rural forefathers, whom we are apt to think very prosaic figures—men whose only work was to ride round their land, getting heavier and heavier in their saddles, and who passed the rest of their days in the half-listless gratification of senses dulled by monotony—had a certain pathos in them nevertheless. Calamities came to *them* too, and their early errors carried hard consequences: perhaps the

love of some sweet maiden, the image of purity, order, and calm, had opened their eyes to the vision of a life in which the days would not seem too long, even without rioting ; but the maiden was lost, and the vision passed away, and then what was left to them, especially when they had become too heavy for the hunt, or for carrying a gun over the furrows, but to drink and get merry, or to drink and get angry, so that they might be independent of variety, and say over again with eager emphasis the things they had said already any time that twelvemonth ? Assuredly, among these flushed and dull-eyed men there were some whom—thanks to their native human-kindness—even riot could never drive into brutality ; men who, when their cheeks were fresh, had felt the keen point of sorrow or remorse, had been pierced by the reeds they leaned on, or had lightly put their limbs in fetters from which no struggle could loose them ; and under these sad circumstances, common to us all, their thoughts could find no resting-place outside the ever-trodden round of their own petty history.

That, at least, was the condition of Godfrey Cass in this six-and-twentieth year of his life. A movement of compunction, helped by those small indefinable influences which every personal relation exerts on a pliant nature, had urged him into a secret marriage, which was a blight on his life. It was an ugly story of low passion, delusion, and waking from delusion, which needs not to be dragged from the privacy of Godfrey's bitter memory. He had long known that the delusion was partly due to a trap laid for him by Dunstan, who saw in his brother's degrading marriage the means of gratifying at once his jealous hate and his cupidity. And if Godfrey could have felt himself simply a victim, the iron bit that destiny had put into his mouth would have chafed him less intolerably. If the curses he muttered half aloud when he was alone had had no other object than Dunstan's diabolical cunning, he might have shrunk less from the consequences of avowal. But he had something else to curse—his own vicious folly,

which now seemed as mad and unaccountable to him as almost all our follies and vices do when their promptings have long passed away. For four years he had thought of Nancy Lammeter, and wooed her with tacit patient worship, as the woman who made him think of the future with joy : she would be his wife, and would make home lovely to him, as his father's home had never been ; and it would be easy, when she was always near, to shake off those foolish habits that were no pleasures, but only a feverish way of annulling vacancy. Godfrey's was an essentially domestic nature, bred up in a home where the hearth had no smiles, and where the daily habits were not chastised by the presence of household order ; his easy disposition made him fall in unresistingly with the family courses, but the need of some tender permanent affection, the longing for some influence that would make the good he preferred easy to pursue, caused the neatness, purity, and liberal orderliness of the Lammeter household, sunned by the smile of Nancy, to seem like those fresh bright hours of the morning, when temptations go to sleep, and leave the ear open to the voice of the good angel, inviting to industry, sobriety, and peace. And yet the hope of this paradise had not been enough to save him from a course which shut him out of it for ever. Instead of keeping fast hold of the strong silken rope by which Nancy would have drawn him safe to the green banks, where it was easy to step firmly, he had let himself be dragged back into mud and slime, in which it was useless to struggle. He had made ties for himself which robbed him of all wholesome motive, and were a constant exasperation.

Still, there was one position worse than the present : it was the position he would be in when the ugly secret was disclosed ; and the desire that continually triumphed over every other was that of warding off the evil day, when he would have to bear the consequences of his father's violent resentment for the wound inflicted on his family pride—would have, perhaps, to turn his back on that hereditary ease and dignity which, after

all, was a sort of reason for living, and would carry with him the certainty that he was banished for ever from the sight and esteem of Nancy Lammeter. The longer the interval, the more chance there was of deliverance from some, at least, of the hateful consequences to which he had sold himself—the more opportunities remained for him to snatch the strange gratification of seeing Nancy, and gathering some faint indications of her lingering regard. Towards this gratification he was impelled, fitfully, every now and then, after having passed weeks in which he had avoided her as the far-off, bright-winged prize, that only made him spring forward, and find his chain all the more galling. One of those fits of yearning was on him now, and it would have been strong enough to have persuaded him to trust Wildfire to Dunstan rather than disappoint the yearning, even if he had not had another reason for his disinclination towards the morrow's hunt. That other reason was the fact that the morning's meet was near Batherley, the market-town where the unhappy woman lived, whose image became more odious to him every day; and to his thoughts the whole vicinago was haunted by her. The yoke a man creates for himself by wrongdoing will breed hate in the kindest nature; and the good-humoured, affectionate-hearted Godfrey Cass, was fast becoming a bitter man, visited by cruel wishes, that seemed to enter, and depart, and enter again, like demons who had found in him a ready-garnished home.

What was he to do this evening to pass the time? He might as well go to the Rainbow, and hear the talk about the cock-fighting: everybody was there, and what else was there to be done? Though, for his own part, he did not care a button for cock-fighting. Snuff, the brown spaniel, who had placed herself in front of him, and had been watching him for some time, now jumped up in impatience for the expected caress. But Godfrey thrust her away without looking at her, and left the room, followed humbly by the unresenting Snuff—perhaps because she saw no other career open to her.



## CHAPTER IV.

DUNSTAN CASS, setting off in the raw morning, at the judiciously quiet pace of a man who is obliged to ride to cover on his hunter, had to take his way along the lane, which, at its farther extremity, passed by the piece of unenclosed ground called the Stonepit, where stood the cottage, once a stone-cutter's shed, now for fifteen years inhabited by Silas Marner. The spot looked very dreary at this season, with the moist trodden clay about it, and the red, muddy water high up in the deserted quarry. That was Dunstan's first thought as he approached it; the second was, that the old fool of a weaver, whose loom he heard rattling already, had a great deal of money hidden somewhere. How was it that he, Dunstan Cass, who had often heard talk of Marner's miserliness, had never thought of suggesting to Godfrey that he should frighten or persuade the old fellow into lending the money on the excellent security of the young Squire's prospects? The resource occurred to him now as so easy and agreeable, especially as Marner's hoard was likely to be large enough to leave Godfrey a handsome surplus beyond his immediate needs, and enable him to accommodate his faithful brother, that he had almost turned the horse's head towards home again. Godfrey would be ready enough to accept the suggestion: he would snatch eagerly at a plan that might save him from parting with Wildfire. But when Dunstan's meditation reached this point, the inclination to go on grew strong and prevailed. He didn't want to give Godfrey that pleasure: he preferred that Master Godfrey should be vexed. Moreover, Dunstan enjoyed the self-important consciousness of having a horse to sell, and the opportunity of driving a bargain, swaggering, and, possibly, taking somebody in. He might have all the satisfaction attendant on selling his brother's horse, and not the less have the further satisfaction of setting Godfrey to borrow Marner's money. So he rode on to cover.

Bryce and Keating were there, as Dunstan was quite sure they would be—he was such a lucky fellow.

‘Hey-day,’ said Bryce, who had long had his eye on Wildfire, ‘you’re on your brother’s horse to-day: how’s that?’ *Exchanged horses*

‘Oh, I’ve swopped with him,’ said Dunstan, whose delight in lying, grandly independent of utility, was not to be diminished by the likelihood that his hearer would not believe him—‘Wildfire’s mine now.’

‘What! has he swopped with you for that big-boned hack of yours?’ said Bryce, quite aware that he should get another lie in answer.

‘Oh, there was a little account between us,’ said Dunsey, carelessly, ‘and Wildfire made it even. I accommodated him by taking the horse, though it was against my will, for I’d got an itch for a mare o’ Jortin’s—as rare a bit o’ blood as ever you throw your leg across. But I shall keep Wildfire, now I’ve got him; though I’d a bid of a hundred and fifty for him the other day, from a man over at Flitton—he’s buying for Lord Cromleek—a fellow with a cast in his eye, and a green waistcoat. But I mean to stick to Wildfire: I shan’t get a better at a fence in a hurry. The mare’s got more blood, but she’s a bit too weak in the hind-quarters.’

Bryce of course divined that Dunstan wanted to sell the horse, and Dunstan knew that he divined it (horse-dealing is only one of many human transactions carried on in this ingenious manner); and they both considered that the bargain was in its first stage, when Bryce replied ironically—

‘I wonder at that now; I wonder you mean to keep him; for I never heard of a man who didn’t want to sell his horse getting a bid of half as much again as the horse was worth. You’ll be lucky if you get a hundred.’

Keating rode up now, and the transaction became more complicated. It ended in the purchase of the horse by Bryce for a hundred and twenty, to be paid on the delivery of Wildfire, safe and sound, at the Batherley stables. It did occur to Dunsey that it might

be wise for him to give up the day's hunting, proceed at once to Batherley, and, having waited for Bryce's return, hire a horse to carry him home with the money in his pocket. But the inclination for a run, encouraged by confidence in his luck, and by a draught of brandy from his pocket-pistol at the conclusion of the bargain, was not easy to overcome, especially with a horse under him that would take the fences to the admiration of the field. Dunstan, however, took one fence too many, and 'staked' his horse. His own ill-favoured person, which was quite unmarketable, escaped without injury, but poor Wildfire, unconscious of his price, turned on his flank, and painfully panted his last. It happened that Dunstan, a short time before, having had to get down to arrange his stirrup, had muttered a good many curses at this interruption, which had thrown him in the rear of the hunt near the moment of glory, and under this exasperation had taken the fences more blindly. He would soon have been up with the hounds again, when the fatal accident happened; and hence he was between eager riders in advance, not troubling themselves about what happened behind them, and far-off stragglers, who were as likely as not to pass quite aloof from the line of road in which Wildfire had fallen. Dunstan, whose nature it was to care more for immediate annoyances than for remote consequences, no sooner recovered his legs, and saw that it was all over with Wildfire, than he felt a satisfaction at the absence of witnesses to a position which no swaggering could make enviable. Reinforcing himself, after his shake, with a little brandy and much swearing, he walked as fast as he could to a coppice on his right hand, through which it occurred to him that he could make his way to Batherley without danger of encountering any member of the hunt. His first intention was to hire a horse there and ride home forthwith, for to walk many miles without a gun in his hand, and along an ordinary road, was as much out of the question to him as to other spirited young men of his kind. He did not much mind about taking the bad news to Godfrey, for he had to offer him

at the same time the resource of Marner's money ; and if Godfrey kicked, as he always did, at the notion of making a fresh debt, from which he himself got the smallest share of advantage, why, he wouldn't kick long : Dunstan felt sure he could worry Godfrey into anything. The idea of Marner's money kept growing in vividness now the want of it had become immediate ; the prospect of having to make his appearance with the muddy boots of a pedestrian at Batherley, and encounter the grinning queries of stablemen, stood unpleasantly in the way of his impatience to be back at Raveloe and carry out his felicitous plan ; and a casual visitation of his waistcoat pocket, as he was ruminating, awakened his memory to the fact the two or three small coins his fore-finger encountered there were of too pale a colour to cover that small debt, without payment of which Jennings had declared he would never do any more business with Dunsey Cass. After all, according to the direction in which the run had brought him, he was not so very much farther from home than he was from Batherley ; but Dunsey, not being remarkable for clearness of head, was only led to this conclusion by the gradual perception that there were other reasons for choosing the unprecedented course of walking home. It was now nearly four o'clock, and a mist was gathering : the sooner he got into the road the better. He remembered having crossed the road and seen the finger-post only a little while before Wildfire broke down ; so, buttoning his coat, twisting the lash of his hunting whip compactly round the handle, and rapping the tops of his boots with a self-possessed air, as if to assure himself that he was not at all taken by surprise, he set off with the sense that he was undertaking a remarkable feat of bodily exertion, which somehow, and at some time, he should be able to dress up and magnify to the admiration of a select circle at the Rainbow. When a young gentleman like Dunsey is reduced to so exceptional a mode of locomotion as walking, a whip in his hand is a desirable corrective to a too bewildering dreamy sense of unwontedness in his position ; and

Dunstan, as he went along through the gathering mist, was always rapping his whip somewhere. It was Godfrey's whip, which he had chosen to take without leave because it had a gold handle; of course no one could see, when Dunstan held it, that the name *Godfrey Cass* was cut in deep letters on that gold handle—they could only see that it was a very handsome whip. Dunsey was not without fear that he might meet some acquaintance in whose eyes he would cut a pitiable figure, for mist is no screen when people get close to each other; but when he at last found himself in the well-known Raveloe lanes without having met a soul, he silently remarked that that was part of his usual good-luck. But now the mist, helped by the evening darkness, was more of a screen than he desired, for it hid the ruts into which his feet were liable to slip—hid everything, so that he had to guide his steps by dragging his whip along the low bushes in advance of the hedgerow. He must soon, he thought, be getting near the opening at the Stone-pits: he should find it out by the break in the hedgerow. He found it out, however, by another circumstance which he had not expected—namely, by certain gleams of light, which he presently guessed to proceed from Silas Marner's cottage. That cottage and the money hidden within it had been in his mind continually, during his walk, and he had been imagining ways of cajoling and tempting the weaver to part with the immediate possession of his money for the sake of receiving interest. Dunstan felt as if there must be a little frightening added to the cajolery, for his own arithmetical convictions were not clear enough to afford him any forcible demonstration as to the advantages of interest; and as for security, he regarded it vaguely as a means of cheating a man, by making him believe that he would be paid. Altogether, the operation on the miser's mind was a task that Godfrey would be sure to hand over to his more daring and cunning brother: Dunstan had made up his mind to that; and by the time he saw the light gleaming through the chinks of Marner's shutters, the idea of a dialogue

with the weaver had become so familiar to him, that it occurred to him as quite a natural thing to make the acquaintance forthwith. There might be several conveniences attending this course: the weaver had possibly got a lantern, and Dunstan was tired of feeling his way. He was still nearly three-quarters of a mile from home, and the lane was becoming unpleasantly slippery, for the mist was passing into rain. He turned up the bank, not without some fear lest he might miss the right way, since he was not certain whether the light were in front or on the side of the cottage. But he felt the ground before him cautiously with his whip-handle, and at last arrived safely at the door. He knocked loudly, rather enjoying the idea that the old fellow would be frightened at the sudden noise. He heard no movement in reply: all was silence in the cottage. Was the weaver gone to bed, then? If so, why had he left a light? That was a strange forgetfulness in a weaver. Dunstan knocked still more loudly, and, without pausing for a reply, pushed his fingers through the latch-hole, intending to shake the door and pull the latch-string up and down, not doubting that the door was fastened. But, to his surprise, at this double motion the door opened, and he found himself in front of a bright fire, which lit up every corner of the cottage—the bed, the beam, the three chairs, and the table—and showed him that Marnier was not there.

Nothing at that moment could be much more inviting to Dunstan than the bright fire on the brick hearth: he walked in and heated himself by it at once. There was something in front of the fire, too, that would have been inviting to a hungry man, if it had been in a different stage of cooking. It was a small bit of pork suspended from the kettle-hanger by a string passed through a large door-key, in a way known to primitive house-keepers unpossessed of jacks. But the pork had been hung at the farthest extremity of the hanger, apparently to prevent the roasting from proceeding too rapidly during the owner's absence. The old staring simpleton had hot meat for his supper, then? thought Dunstan.

People had always said he lived on mouldy bread, on purpose to check his appetite. But where could he be at this time, and on such an evening, leaving his supper in this stage of preparation, and his door unfastened? Dunstan's own recent difficulty in making his way suggested to him that the weaver had perhaps gone outside his cottage to fetch in fuel, or for some such brief purpose, and had slipped into the Stone-pit. That was an interesting idea to Dunstan, carrying consequences of entire novelty. If the weaver was dead, who had a right to his money? Who would know where his money was hidden? *Who would know that anybody had come to take it away?* He went no farther into the subtleties of evidence: the pressing question, 'Where is the money?' now took such entire possession of him as to make him quite forget that the weaver's death was not a certainty. A dull mind, once arriving at an inference that flatters a desire, is rarely able to retain the impression that the notion from which the inference started was purely problematic. And Dunstan's mind was as dull as the mind of a possible felon usually is. There were only three hiding-places where he had ever heard of cottagers' hoards being found: the thatch, the bed, and a hole in the floor. Marner's cottage had no thatch; and Dunstan's first act, after a train of thought made rapid by the stimulus of cupidity, was to go up to the bed; but while he did so, his eyes travelled eagerly over the floor, where the bricks, distinct in the fire-light, were discernable under the sprinkling of sand. But not everywhere; for there was one spot, and one only, which was quite covered with sand, and sand showing the marks of fingers which had apparently been careful to spread it over a given space. It was near the treddles of the loom. In an instant Dunstan darted to that spot, swept away the sand with his whip, and, inserting the thin end of the hook between the bricks, found that they were loose. In haste he lifted up two bricks, and saw what he had no doubt was the object of his search; for what could there be but money in those two leathern bags? And, from their weight,

they must be filled with guineas. Dunstan felt round the hole, to be certain that it held no more; then hastily replaced the bricks, and spread the sand over them. Hardly more than five minutes had passed since he entered the cottage, but it seemed to Dunstan like a long while; and though he was without any distinct recognition of the possibility that Marner might be alive, and might re-enter the cottage at any moment, he felt an undefinable dread laying hold on him, as he rose to his feet with the bags in his hand. He would hasten out into the darkness, and then consider what he should do with the bags. He closed the door behind him immediately, that he might shut in the stream of light: a few steps would be enough to carry him beyond betrayal by the gleams from the shutter-chinks and the latch-hole. The rain and darkness had got thicker, and he was glad of it; though it was awkward walking with both hands filled, so that it was as much as he could do to grasp his whip along with one of the bags. But when he had gone a yard or two, he might take his time. So he stepped forward into the darkness.

## CHAPTER V.

WHEN Dunstan Cass turned his back on the cottage, Silas Marner was not more than a hundred yards away from it, plodding along from the village with a sack thrown round his shoulders as an over-coat, and with a horn lantern in his hand. His legs were weary, but his mind was at ease, free from the presentiment of change. The sense of security more frequently springs from habit than from conviction, and for this reason it often subsists after such a change in the conditions as might have been expected to suggest alarm. The lapse of time during which a given event has not happened, is, in this logic of habit, constantly alleged as a reason why the event should never happen, even when the lapse of time is precisely the added condition which makes the event imminent. A man will tell you that he



has worked in a mine for forty years unhurt by an accident, as a reason why he should apprehend no danger, though the roof is beginning to sink ; and it is often observable, that the older a man gets, the more difficult it is to him to retain a believing conception of his own death. This influence of habit was necessarily strong in a man whose life was so monotonous as Marner's—who saw no new people and heard of no new events to keep alive in him the idea of the unexpected and the changeful ; and it explains, simply enough, why his mind could be at ease, though he had left his house and his treasure more defenceless than usual. Silas was thinking with double complacency of his supper : first, because it would be hot and savoury ; and, secondly, because it would cost him nothing. For the little bit of pork was a present from that excellent housewife, Miss Priscilla Lammeter, to whom he had this day carried home a handsome piece of linen ; and it was only on occasion of a present like this, that Silas indulged himself with roast meat. Supper was his favourite meal, because it came at his time of revelry, when his heart warmed over his gold ; whenever he had roast-meat, he always chose to have it for supper. But this evening, he had no sooner ingeniously knotted his string fast round his bit of pork, twisted the string according to rule over his door-key, passed it through the handle, and made it fast on the hanger, than he remembered that a piece of very fine twine was indispensable to his 'setting up' a new piece of work in his loom early in the morning. It had slipped his memory, because, in coming from Mr. Lammeter's, he had not had to pass through the village ; but to lose time by going on errands in the morning was out of the question. It was a nasty fog to turn out into, but there were things Silas loved better than his own comfort ; so, drawing his pork to the extremity of the hanger, and arming himself with his lantern and his old sack, he set out on what, in ordinary weather, would have been a twenty minutes' errand. He could not have locked his door without undoing his well-knotted string and retarding

his supper; it was not worth his while to make that sacrifice. What thief would find his way to the Stone-pits on such a night as this? and why should he come on this particular night, when he had never come through all the fifteen years before? These questions were not distinctly present in Silas's mind; they merely serve to represent the vaguely-felt foundation of his freedom from anxiety.

He reached his door in much satisfaction that his errand was done: he opened it, and to his short-sighted eyes everything remained as he had left it, except that the fire sent out a welcome increase of heat. He trod about the floor while putting by his lantern and throwing aside his hat and sack, so as to merge the marks of Dunstan's feet on the sand in the marks of his own nailed boots. Then he moved his pork nearer to the fire, and sat down to the agreeable business of tending the meat and warming himself at the same time.

Any one who had looked at him as the red light shone upon his pale face, strange straining eyes, and meagre form, would perhaps have understood the mixture of contemptuous pity, dread, and suspicion with which he was regarded by his neighbours in Raveloe. Yet few men could be more harmless than poor Marner. In his truthful simple soul, not even the growing greed and worship of gold could beget any vice directly injurious to others. The light of his faith quite put out, and his affections made desolate, he had clung with all the force of his nature to his work and his money; and like all objects to which a man devotes himself, they had fashioned him into correspondence with themselves. His loom, as he wrought in it without ceasing, had in its turn wrought on him, and confirmed more and more the monotonous craving for its monotonous response. His gold, as he hung over it and saw it grow, gathered his power of loving together into a hard isolation like its own.

As soon as he was warm he began to think it would be a long while to wait till after supper before he drew out his guineas, and it would be pleasant to see them on the table before him as he ate his unwonted feast.

For joy is the best of wine, and Silas's guineas were a golden wine of that sort.

He rose and placed his candle unsuspectingly on the floor near his loom, swept away the sand without noticing any change, and removed the bricks. The sight of the empty hole made his heart leap violently, but the belief that his gold was gone could not come at once—only terror, and the eager effort to put an end to the terror. He passed his trembling hand all about the hole, trying to think it possible that his eyes had deceived him; then he held the candle in the hole and examined it curiously, trembling more and more. At last he shook so violently that he let fall the candle, and lifted his hands to his head, trying to steady himself, that he might think. Had he put his gold somewhere else, by a sudden resolution last night, and then forgotten it? A man falling into dark water seeks a momentary footing even on sliding stones; and Silas, by acting as if he believed in false hopes, warded off the moment of despair. He searched in every corner, he turned his bed over, and shook it, and kneaded it; he looked in his brick oven where he laid his sticks. When there was no other place to be searched, he knelt down again and felt once more all round the hole. There was no untried refuge left for a moment's shelter from the terrible truth.

Yes, there was a sort of refuge which always comes with the prostration of thought under an overpowering passion: it was that expectation of impossibilities, that belief in contradictory images, which is still distinct from madness, because it is capable of being dissipated by the external fact. Silas got up from his knees trembling, and looked round at the table: didn't the gold lie there after all? The table was bare. Then he turned and looked behind him—looked all round his dwelling, seeming to strain his brown eyes after some possible appearance of the bags, where he had already sought them in vain. He could see every object in his cottage—and his gold was not there.

Again he put his trembling hands to his head, and

gave a wild ringing scream, the cry of desolation. For a few moments after, he stood motionless ; but the cry had relieved him from the first maddening pressure of the truth. He turned and tottered towards his loom, and got into the seat where he worked, instinctively seeking this as the strongest assurance of reality.

And now that all the false hopes had vanished, and the first shock of certainty was past, the idea of a thief began to present itself, and he entertained it eagerly, because a thief might be caught and made to restore the gold. The thought brought some new strength with it, and he started from his loom to the door. As he opened it the rain beat in upon him, for it was falling more and more heavily. There were no footsteps to be tracked on such a night—footsteps ? When had the thief come ? During Silas's absence in the daytime the door had been locked, and there had been no marks of any inroad on his return by daylight. And in the evening, too, he said to himself; everything was the same as when he had left it. The sand and bricks looked as if they had not been moved. Was it a thief who had taken the bags ? or was it a cruel power that no hands could reach, which had delighted in making him a second time desolate ? He shrank from this vaguer dread, and fixed his mind with struggling effort on the robber with hands, who could be reached by hands. His thoughts glanced at all the neighbours who had made any remarks, or asked any questions which he might now regard as a ground of suspicion. There was Jem Rodney, a known poacher, and otherwise disreputable: he had often met Marner in his journeys across the fields, and had said something jestingly about the weaver's money ; nay, he had once irritated Marner, by lingering at the fire when he called to light his pipe, instead of going about his business. Jem Rodney was the man—there was ease in the thought. Jem could be found and made to restore the money: Marner did not want to punish him, but only to get back his gold which had gone from him, and left his soul like a forlorn traveller on an unknown desert. The robber must be

laid hold of. Marner's ideas of legal authority were confused, but he felt that he must go and proclaim his loss ; and the great people in the village—the clergyman, the constable, and Squire Cass—would make Jem Rodney, or somebody else, deliver up the stolen money. He rushed out in the rain, under the stimulus of this hope, forgetting to cover his head, not caring to fasten his door ; for he felt as if he had nothing left to lose. He ran swiftly till want of breath compelled him to slacken his pace as he was entering the village at the turning close to the Rainbow.

The Rainbow, in Marner's view, was a place of luxurious resort for rich and stout husbands, whose wives had superfluous stores of linen ; it was the place where he was likely to find the powers and dignities of Raveloe, and where he could most speedily make his loss public. He lifted the latch, and turned into the bright bar or kitchen on the right hand, where the less lofty customers of the house were in the habit of assembling, the parlour on the left being reserved for the more select society in which Squire Cass frequently enjoyed the double pleasure of conviviality and condescension. But the parlour was dark to-night, the chief personages who ornamented its circle being all at Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance, as Godfrey Cass was. And in consequence of this, the party on the high-screened seats in the kitchen was more numerous than usual ; several personages, who would otherwise have been admitted into the parlour and enlarged the opportunity of hectoring and condescension for their betters, being content this evening to vary their enjoyment by taking their spirits-and-water where they could themselves hector and condescend in company that called for beer.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE conversation, which was at a high pitch of animation when Silas approached the door of the Rainbow, had, as usual, been slow and intermittent when the com-

pany first assembled. The pipes began to be puffed in a silence which had an air of severity; the more important customers, who drank spirits and sat nearest the fire, staring at each other as if a bet were depending on the first man who winked; while the beer-drinkers, chiefly men in fustian jackets and smock-frocks, kept their eyelids down and rubbed their hands across their mouths, as if their draughts of beer were a funereal duty attended with embarrassing sadness. At last Mr. Snell, the landlord, a man of a neutral disposition, accustomed to stand aloof from human differences as those of beings who were all alike in need of liquor, broke silence, by saying in a doubtful tone to his cousin the butcher,—

‘Some folks ’ud say that was a fine beast you druv in yesterday, Bob?’

The butcher, a jolly, smiling, red-haired man, was not disposed to answer rashly. He gave a few puffs before he spat and replied, ‘And they wouldn’t be fur wrong, John.’

After this feeble delusive thaw, the silence set in as severely as before.

‘Was it a red Durham?’ said the farrier, taking up the thread of discourse after the lapse of a few minutes.

The farrier looked at the landlord, and the landlord looked at the butcher, as the person who must take the responsibility of answering.

‘Red it was,’ said the butcher, in his good-humoured husky treble—‘and a Durham it was.’

‘Then you needn’t tell me who you bought it of,’ said the farrier, looking round with some triumph; ‘I know who it is has got the red Durhams o’ this countryside. And she’d a white star on her brow, I’ll bet a penny?’ The farrier leaned forward with his hands on his knees as he put this question, and his eyes twinkled knowingly.

‘Well; yes—she might,’ said the butcher, slowly, considering that he was giving a decided affirmative. ‘I don’t say contrary.’

'I knew that very well,' said the farrier, throwing himself backward again, and speaking defiantly; 'if I don't know Mr. Lammeter's cows, I should like to know who does—that's all. And as for the cow you've bought, bargain or no bargain, I've been at the drenching of her—contradick me who will.'

The farrier looked fierce, and the mild butcher's conversational spirit was roused a little.

'I'm not for contradicking no man,' he said; 'I'm for peace and quietness. Some are for cutting long ribs—I'm for cutting 'em short, myself; but I don't quarrel with 'em. All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss—and anybody as was reasonable, it 'ud bring tears into their eyes to look at it.'

'Well, it's the cow as I drenched, whatever it is,' pursued the farrier, angrily; 'and it was Mr. Lammeter's cow, else you told a lie when you said it was a red Durham.'

'I tell no lies,' said the butcher, with the same mild huskiness as before; 'and I contradick none—not if a man was to swear himself black: he's no meat o' mine nor none o' my bargains. All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss. And what I say, I'll stick to; but I'll quarrel wi' no man.'

'No,' said the farrier, with bitter sarcasm, looking at the company generally; 'and p'rhaps you aren't pig-headed; and p'rhaps you didn't say the cow was a red Durham; and p'rhaps you didn't say she'd got a star on her brow—stick to that, now you're at it.'

'Come, come,' said the landlord; 'let the cow alone. The truth lies atween you: you're both right and both wrong, as I allays says. And as for the cow's being Mr. Lammeter's, I say nothing to that; but this I say, as the Rainbow's the Rainbow. And for the matter o' that, if the talk is to be o' the Lammeters, you know the most upo' that head, oh, Mr. Macey? You remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father come into these parts, and took the Warrens?'

Mr. Macey, tailor and parish-clerk, the latter of which functions rheumatism had of late obliged him to share

with a small-featured young man who sat opposite him, held his white head on one side, and twirled his thumbs with an air of complacency, slightly seasoned with criticism. He smiled pityingly, in answer to the landlord's appeal, and said—

'Aye, aye; I know, I know; but I let other folks talk. I've laid by now, and gev up to the young uns. Ask them as have been to school at Tarley: they've learnt pernouncing; that's come up since my day.'

'If you're pointing at me, Mr. Macey,' said the deputy clerk, with an air of anxious propriety, 'I'm nowise a man to speak out of my place. As the psalm says—

"I know what's right, nor only so,  
But also practise what I know."

'Well, then, I wish you'd keep hold o' the tune when it's set for you; if you're for practising, I wish you'd practise that,' said a large jocose-looking man, an excellent wheelwright in his week-day capacity, but on Sundays leader of the choir. He winked, as he spoke, at two of the company, who were known officially as 'the bassoon' and 'the key-bugle,' in the confidence that he was expressing the sense of the musical profession in Raveloe.

Mr. Tookey, the deputy-clerk, who shared the unpopularity common to deputies, turned very red, but replied, with careful moderation—'Mr. Winthrop, if you'll bring me any proof as I'm in the wrong, I'm not the man to say I won't alter. But there's people set up their own ears for a standard, and expect the whole choir to follow 'em. There may be two opinions, I hope.'

'Aye, aye,' said Mr. Macey, who felt very well satisfied with this attack on youthful presumption: 'ye're right there, Tookey: there's allays two 'pinions; there's the 'pinion a man has of himsen, and there's the 'pinion other folks have on him. There'd be two 'pinions about a cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself.'

'Well, Mr. Macey,' said poor Tookey, serious amidst



the general laughter, 'I undertook to partially fill up the office of parish-clerk by Mr. Crackenthorp's desire, whenever your infirmities should make you unfitting; and it's one of the rights thereof to sing in the choir—else why have you done the same yourself?'

'Ah! but the old gentleman and you are two folks,' said Ben Winthrop. 'The old gentleman's got a gift. Why, the Squire used to invite him to take a glass, only to hear him sing the 'Red Rover'; didn't he, Mr. Macey? It's a nat'ral gift. There's my little lad Aaron, he's got a gift—he can sing a tune off straight, like a throstle. But as for you, Master Tookey, you'd better stick to your 'Athens': your voice is well enough when you keep it up in your nose. It's your inside as isn't right made for music: it's no better nor a hollow stalk.'

This kind of unflinching frankness was the most piquant form of joke to the company at the Rainbow, and Ben Winthrop's insult was felt by everybody to have capped Mr. Macey's epigram.

'I see what it is plain enough,' said Mr. Tookey, unable to keep cool any longer. 'There's a conspiracy to turn me out o' the choir, as I shouldn't share the Christmas money—that's where it is. But I shall speak to Mr. Crackenthorp; I'll not be put upon by no man.'

'Nay, nay, Tookey,' said Ben Winthrop. 'We'll pay you your share to keep out of it—that's what we'll do. There's things folks 'ud pay to be rid on, besides varmin.'

'Come, come,' said the landlord, who felt that paying people for their absence was a principle dangerous to society; 'a joke's a joke. We're all good friends here, I hope. We must give and take. You're both right and you're both wrong, as I say. I agree wi' Mr. Macey here, as there's two opinions; and if mine was asked, I should say they're both right. Tookey's right and Winthrop's right, and they've only got to split the difference and make themselves even.'

The farrier was puffing his pipe rather fiercely, in some contempt at this trivial discussion. He had no

ear for music himself, and never went to church, as being of the medical profession, and likely to be in requisition for delicate cows. But the butcher, having music in his soul, had listened with a divided desire for Tookey's defeat, and for the preservation of the peace.

'To be sure,' he said, following up the landlord's conciliatory view, 'we're fond of our old clerk; it's nat'ral, and him used to be such a singer, and got a brother as is known for the first fiddler in this countryside. Eh, it's a pity but what Solomon lived in our village, and could give us a tune when we liked; eh, Mr. Macey? I'd keep him in liver and lights for nothing—that I would.'

'Aye, aye,' said Mr. Macey, in the height of complacency; 'our family's been known for musicianers as far back as anybody can tell. But them things are dying out, as I tell Solomon every time he comes round; there's no voices like what there used to be, and there's nobody remembers what we remember, if it isn't the old crows.'

'Aye, you remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father came into these parts, don't you, Mr. Macey?' said the landlord.

'I should think I did,' said the old man, who had now gone through that complimentary process necessary to bring him up to the point of narration, 'and a fine old gentleman he was—as fine, and finer nor the Mr. Lammeter as now is. He came from a bit north'ard, so far as I could ever make out. But there's nobody rightly knows about those parts: only it couldn't be far north'ard, nor much different from this country, for he brought a fine breed o' sheep with him, so there must be pastures there, and everything reasonable. We heard tell as he'd sold his own land to come and take the Warrens, and that seemed odd for a man as had land of his own, to come and rent a farm in a strange place. But they say it was along of his wife's dying; though there's reasons in things as nobody knows on—that's pretty much what I've made out; though some folks are so wise, they'll find you fifty reasons straight

off, and all the while the real reason's winking at 'em in the corner, and they niver see't. Howsomer, it was soon seen as we'd got a new parish'ner as know'd the rights and customs o' things, and kep a good house, and was well looked on by everybody. And the young man—that's the Mr. Lammeter as now is, for he'd niver a sister—soon begun to court Miss Osgood, that's the sister o' the Mr. Osgood as now is, and a fine handsome lass she was—ch, you can't think—they pretend this young lass is like her, but that's the way wi' people as don't know what come before 'em. I should know, for I helped the old rector, Mr. Drumlow as was, I helped him marry 'em.'

Here Mr. Macey paused ; he always gave his narrative in instalments, expecting to be questioned according to precedent.

'Aye, and a partic'lar thing happened, didn't it, Mr. Macey, so as you were likely to remember that marriage?' said the landlord, in a congratulatory tone.

'I should think there did—a *very* partic'lar thing, said Mr. Macey, nodding sideways. 'For Mr. Drumlow—poor old gentleman, I was fond on him, though he'd got a bit confused in his head, what wi' age and wi' taking a drop o' summat warm when the service come of a cold morning. And young Mr. Lammeter, he'd have no way but he must be married in Janiuary, which, to be sure, 's a unreasonable time to be married in, for it isn't like a christening or a burying, as you can't help ; and so Mr. Drumlow—poor old gentleman, I was fond on him—but when he come to put the questions, he put 'em by the rule o' contrairy, like, and he says, "Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded wife?" says he, and then he says, "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded husband?" says he. But the partic'larest thing of all is, as nobody took any notice on it but me, and they answered straight off "yes," like as if it had been me saying "Amen" i' the right place, without listening to what went before.'

'But *you* knew what was going on well enough, didn't

you, Mr. Macey ? You were live enough, eh ? ' said the butcher.

' Lor bless you ! ' said Mr. Macey, pausing, and smiling in pity at the impotence of his hearers' imagination—' why, I was all of a tremble : it was as if I'd been a coat pulled by the two tails, like ; for I couldn't stop the parson, I couldn't take upon me to do that ; and yet I said to myself, I says, " Suppose they shouldn't be fast married, 'cause the words are contrary ? " and my head went working like a mill, for I was allays uncommon for turning things over and seeing all round 'em ; and I says to myself, " Is 't the meanin' or the words as makes folks fast i' wedlock ? " For the parson meant right, and the bride and bridegroom meant right. But then, when I come to think on it, meanin' goes but a little way i' most things, for you may mean to stick things together and your glue may be bad, and then where are you ? And so I says to mysen, " It isn't the meanin', it's the glue." And I was worreted as if I'd got three bells to pull at once, when we got into the vestry, and they begun to sign their names. But where's the use o' talking ?—you can't think what goes on in a 'cute man's inside.'

' But you held in for all that, didn't you, Mr. Macey ? ' said the landlord.

' Aye, I held in tight till I was by mysen wi' Mr. Drumlow, and then I out wi' everything, but respectful, as I allays did. And he made light on it, and he says, " Pooh, pooh, Macey, make yourself easy," he says, " it's neither the meaning nor the words—it's the regester does it—that's the glue." So you see he settled it easy ; for parsons and doctors know everything by heart, like, so as they aren't worreted wi' thinking what's the rights and wrongs o' things, as I'n been many and many's the time. And sure enough the wedding turned out all right, on'y poor Mrs. Lammeter—that's Miss Osgood as was—died afore the lasses were growed up ; but for prosperity and everything respectable, there's no family more looked on.'

Every one of Mr. Macey's audience had heard this

story many times, but it was listened to as if it had been a favourite tune, and at certain points the puffing of the pipes was momentarily suspended, that the listeners might give their whole minds to the expected words. But there was more to come; and Mr. Snell, the landlord, duly put the leading question.

'Why, old Mr. Lammeter had a pretty fortin, didn't they say, when he come into these parts?'

'Well, yes,' said Mr. Macey; 'but I daresay it's as much as this Mr. Lammeter's done to keep it whole. For there was allays a talk as nobody could get rich on the Warrens: though he holds it cheap, for it's what they call Charity Land.'

'Aye, and there's few folks know so well as you how it come to be Charity Land, eh, Mr. Macey?' said the butcher.

'How should they?' said the old clerk, with some contempt. 'Why, my grandfather made the grooms' livery for that Mr. Cliff as came and built the big stables at the Warrens. Why; they're stables four times as big as Squire Cass's, for he thought o' nothing but hosses and hunting, Cliff didn't—a Lunnon tailor, some folks said, as had gone mad wi' cheating. For he couldn't ride; lor bless you! they said he'd got no more grip o' the hoss than if his legs had been cross sticks: my grandfather heard old Squire Cass say so many and many a time. But ride he would, as if old Harry had been a-driving him; and he'd a son, a lad o' sixteen; and nothing would his father have him do, but he must ride and ride—though the lad was frightened, they said. And it was a common saying as the father wanted to ride the tailor out o' the lad, and make a gentleman on him—not but what I'm a tailor myself, but in respect as God made me such, I'm proud on it, for "Macey tailor," 's been wrote up over our door since afore the Queen's heads went out on the shillings. But Cliff, he was ashamed o' being called a tailor, and he was sore vexed as his riding was laughed at, and nobody o' the gentlefolks hereabout could abide him. Howsomer, the poor lad got sickly and died, and the father didn't

live long after him, for he got queerer nor ever, and they said he used to go out i' the dead o' the night, wi' a lantern in his hand, to the stables, and set a lot o' lights burning, for he got as he couldn't sleep; and there he'd stand, cracking his whip and looking at his hosses; and they said it was a mercy as the stables didn't get burnt down wi' the poor dumb creaturs in 'em. But at last he died raving, and they found as he'd left all his property, Warrens and all, to a Lunnion Charity, and that's how the Warrens come to be Charity land; though, as for the stables, Mr. Lammeter never uscs 'em—they're out o' all character—lor bless you! if you was to set the doors a-banging in 'em, it 'ud sound like thunder half o'er the parish.'

'Aye, but there's more going on in the stables than what folks see by daylight, eh, Mr. Macey?' said the landlord.

'Aye, aye; go that way of a dark night, that's all,' said Mr. Macey winking mysteriously, 'and then make believe, if you like, as you didn't see lights i' the stables, nor hear the stamping o' the hosses, nor the cracking o' the whips, and howling, too, if it's tow'rt daybreak. "Cliff's Holiday" has been the name of it eversin' I were a boy; that's to say, some said as it was the holiday Old Harry gev him from roasting, like. That's what my father told me, and he was a reasonable man, though there's folks nowadays know what happened afore they were born better nor they know their own business.'

'What do you say to that, eh, Dowlas?' said the landlord, turning to the farrier, who was swelling with impatience for his cue. 'There's a nut for *you* to crack.'

Mr. Dowlas was the negative spirit in the company, and was proud of his position.

'Say? I say what a man *should* say as doesn't shut his eyes to look at a finger-post. I say, as I'm ready to wager any man ten pound, if he'll stand out wi' me any dry night in the pasture before the Warren stables, as we shall neither see lights nor hear noises, if it isn't the blowing of our own noses. That's what I say, and

I've said it many a time ; but there's nobody 'ull ventur a ten-pun' note on their ghos'es as they make so sure of.'

'Why, Dowlas, that's easy betting, that is,' said Ben Winthrop. 'You might as well bet a man as he wouldn't catch the rheumatise if he stood up to's neck in the pool of a frosty night. It 'ud be fine fun for a man to win his bet as he'd catch the rheumatise. Folks as believe in Cliff's Holiday aren't agoing to ventur near it for a matter o' ten pound.'

'If Master Dowlas wants to know the truth on it,' said Mr. Macey, with a sarcastic smile, tapping his thumbs together, 'he's no call to lay any bet—let him go and stan' by himself—there's nobody 'ull hinder him ; and then he can let the parish'ners know if they're wrong.'

'Thank you ! I'm obliged to you,' said the farrier, with a snort of scorn. 'If folks are fools, it's no business o' mine. I don't want to make out the truth about ghos'es : I know it a'ready. But I'm not against a bet—everything fair and open. Let any man bet me ten pound as I shall see Cliff's Holiday, and I'll go and stand by myself. I want no company. I'd as lief do it as I'd fill this pipe.'

'Ah, but who's to watch you, Dowlas, and see you do it ? That's no fair bet,' said the butcher.

'No fair bet ?' replied Mr. Dowlas, angrily. 'I should like to hear any man stand up and say I want to bet unfair. Come now, Master Lundy, I should like to hear you say it.'

'Very like you would,' said the butcher. 'But it's no business o' mine. You're none o' my bargains, and I aren't a-going to try and 'bate your price. If anybody 'll bid for you at your own vallying, let him. I'm for peace and quietness, I am.'

'Yes, that's what every yapping cur is, when you hold a stick up at him,' said the farrier. 'But I'm afraid o' neither man nor ghost, and I'm ready to lay a fair bet—I aren't a turn-tail cur.'

'Aye, but there's this in it, Dowlas,' said the landlord,

speaking in a tone of much candour and tolerance. 'There's folks, i' my opinion, they can't see ghos'es, not if they stood as plain as a pike-staff before 'em. And there's reason i' that. For there's my wife, now, can't smell, not if she'd the strongest of cheese under her nose. I never see'd a ghost myself, but then I says to myself, "Very like I haven't got the smell for 'em." I mean, putting a ghost for a smell, or else contrairiways. And so, I'm for holding with both sides; for, as I say, the truth lies between 'em. And if Dowlas was to go and stand, and say he'd never seen a wink o' Cliff's Holiday all the night through, I'd back him; and if anybody said as Cliff's Holiday was certain sure, for all that, I'd back *him* too. For the smell's what I go by.'

The landlord's analogical argument was not well received by the farrier—a man intensely opposed to compromise.

'Tut, tut,' he said, setting down his glass with refreshed irritation; 'what's the smell got to do with it? Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye? That's what I should like to know. If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places—let 'em come where there's company and candles.'

'As if ghos'es 'ud want to be believed in by anybody so ignirant!' said Mr. Macey, in deep disgust at the farrier's crass incompetence to apprehend the conditions of ghostly phenomena.

*Mr. Macey had a noble that ... and wish to be believed in by people ... but the next ... more willing* CHAPTER VII. *... from the ... to ...*

**Y**ET the next moment there seemed to be some evidence that ghosts had a more condescending disposition than Mr. Macey attributed to them; for the pale thin figure of Silas Marner was suddenly seen standing in the warm light, uttering no word, but looking round at the company with his strange unearthly eyes. The long pipes gave a simultaneous movement, like the antennæ of startled



insects, and every man present, not excepting even the sceptical farrier, had an impression that he saw, not Silas Marner in the flesh, but an apparition; for the door by which Silas had entered was hidden by the high-screened seats, and no one had noticed his approach. Mr. Macey, sitting a long way off the ghost, might be supposed to have felt an argumentative triumph, which would tend to neutralize his share of the general alarm. Had he not always said that when Silas Marner was in that strange trance of his, his soul went loose from his body? Here was the demonstration: nevertheless, on the whole, he would have been as well contented without it. For a few moments there was a dead silence, Marner's want of breath and agitation not allowing him to speak. The landlord, under the habitual sense that he was bound to keep his house open to all company, and confident in the protection of his unbroken neutrality, at last took on himself the task of adjuring the ghost. *addressing*

'Master Marner,' he said, in a conciliatory tone, 'what's lacking to you? What's your business here?'  
'Robbed!' said Silas, gaspingly. 'I've been robbed! I want the constable—and the Justice—and Squire Cass—and Mr. Crackenthorp.'

'Lay hold on him, Jem Rodney,' said the landlord, the idea of a ghost subsiding; 'he's off his head, I doubt. He's wet through.' *Realizing that he was wrong*

Jem Rodney was the outermost man, and sat conveniently near Marner's standing-place; but he declined to give his services.

'Come and lay hold on him yourself, Mr. Snell, if you've a mind,' said Jem, rather sullenly. 'He's been robbed, and murdered too, for what I know,' he added, in a muttering tone.

'Jem Rodney!' said Silas, turning and fixing his strange eyes on the suspected man.

'Aye, Master Marner, what do you want wi' me?' said Jem, trembling a little, and seizing his drinking-can as a defensive weapon.

'If it was you stole my money,' said Silas, clasp-

ing his hands entreatingly, and raising his voice to a cry, 'give it me back,—and I won't meddle with you. I won't set the constable on you. Give it me back, and I'll let you—I'll let you have a guinea.'

'Me stole your money!' said Jem, angrily. 'I'll pitch this can at your eye if you talk o' my stealing your money.' *I will throw the tin mug in your face*

'Come, come, Master Marner,' said the landlord, now rising resolutely, and seizing Marner by the shoulder, 'if you've got any information to lay, speak it out sensible, and show as you're in your right mind, if you expect anybody to listen to you. You're as wet as a drowned rat. Sit down and dry yourself, and speak straight forrard.' *let a plain story*

'Ah, to be sure, man,' said the farrier, who began to feel that he had not been quite on a par with himself and the occasion. 'Let's have no more staring and screaming, else we'll have you strapped for a madman. That was why I didn't speak at the first—thinks I, the man's run mad.'

'Aye, aye, make him sit down,' said several voices at once, well pleased that the reality of ghosts remained still an open question. *had not been yet proven*

The landlord forced Marner to take off his coat, and then to sit down on a chair aloof from every one else, in the centre of the circle, and in the direct rays of the fire. The weaver, too feeble to have any distinct purpose beyond that of getting help to recover his money, submitted unresistingly. The transient fears of the company were now forgotten in their strong curiosity, and all faces were turned towards Silas, when the landlord, having seated himself again, said—

'Now then, Master Marner, what's this you've got to say, as you've been robbed? speak out.'

'He'd better not say again as it was me robbed him,' cried Jem Rodney, hastily. 'What could I ha' done with his money? I could as easy steal the parson's surplice, and wear it.'

'Hold your tongue, Jem, and let's hear what he's got to say,' said the landlord. 'Now then, Master Marner.'

Kench's ; and then, if it's me as is deppity, I'll go back with you, Master Marnar, and examine your promises ; and if anybody's got any fault to find with that, I'll thank him to stand up and say it out like a man.'

By this pregnant speech the farrier had re-established his self-complacency, and waited with confidence to hear himself named as one of the superlatively sensible men. 'Let us see how the night is, though,' said the landlord, who also considered himself personally concerned in this proposition. 'Why, it rains heavy still,' he said, returning from the door.

'Well, I'm not the man to be afraid o' the rain,' said the farrier. 'For it'll look bad when Justice Malam hears as respectable men like us had a information laid before 'em and took no steps.'

The landlord agreed with this view, and after taking the sense of the company, and duly rehearsing a small ceremony known in high ecclesiastical life as the *nolo episcopari*, he consented to take on himself the chill dignity of going to Kench's. But to the farrier's strong disgust, Mr. Macey now started an objection to his proposing himself as a deputy-constable ; for that oracular old gentleman, claiming to know the law, stated, as a fact delivered to him by his father, that no doctor could be a constable.

'And you're a doctor, I reckon, though you're only a cow-doctor—for a fly's a fly, though it may be a hoss-fly,' concluded Mr. Macey, wondering a little at his own 'cuteness.'

There was a hot debate upon this, the farrier being of course ~~indisposed to renounce the~~ quality of doctor, but contending that a doctor could be a constable if he liked—the law meant, he needn't be one if he didn't like. Mr. Macey thought this was nonsense, since the law was not likely to be fonder of doctors than of other folks. Moreover, if it was in the nature of doctors more than of other men not to like being constables, how came Mr. Dowlas to be so eager to act in that capacity ?

'I don't want to act the constable,' said the farrier, driven into a corner by this merciless reasoning ; 'and

there's no man can say it of me, if he'd tell the truth. But if there's to be any jealousy and envying about going to Kench's in the rain, let them go as like it—you won't get me to go, I can tell you.'

By the landlord's intervention, however, the dispute was accommodated. Mr. Dowlas consented to go as a second person disinclined to act officially; and so poor Silas, furnished with some old coverings, turned out with his two companions into the rain again, thinking of the long night-hours before him, not as those do who long to rest, but as those who expect to 'watch for the morning.'

## CHAPTER VIII.

When Godfrey Cass returned from Mrs. Osgood's party at midnight, he was not much surprised to learn that Dunsey had not come home. Perhaps he had not sold Wildfire, and was waiting for another chance—perhaps, on that foggy afternoon, he had preferred housing himself at the Red Lion at Batherley for the night, if the run had kept him in that neighbourhood; for he was not likely to feel much concern about leaving his brother in suspense. Godfrey's mind was too full of Nancy Lammeter's looks and behaviour, too full of the exasperation against himself and his lot, which the sight of her always produced in him, for him to give much thought to Wildfire or to the probabilities of Dunstan's conduct.

The next morning the whole village was excited by the story of the robbery, and Godfrey, like every one else, was occupied in gathering and discussing news about it, and in visiting the Stone-pits. The rain had washed away all possibility of distinguishing footmarks, but a close investigation of the spot had disclosed, in the direction opposite to the village, a tinder-box, with a flint and steel, half sunk in the mud. It was not Silas's tinder-box, for the only one he had ever had was

still standing on his shelf; and the inference generally accepted was, that the tinder box in the ditch was somehow connected with the robbery. A small minority shook their heads, and intimated their opinion that it was not a robbery to have much light thrown on it by tinder-boxes, that Master Marner's tale had a queer look with it, and that such things had been known as a man's doing himself a mischief, and then setting the justice to look for the doer. But when questioned closely as to their grounds for this opinion, and what Master Marner had to gain by such false pretences, they only shook their heads as before, and observed that there was no knowing what some folks counted gain; moreover, that everybody had a right to their own opinions, grounds or no grounds, and that the weaver, as everybody knew, was partly crazy. Mr. Macey, though he joined in the defence of Marner against all suspicious of deceit, also pooh-poohed the tinder-box; indeed, repudiated it as a rather impious suggestion, <sup>P.</sup> tending to imply that everything must be done by human hands, and that there was no power which could make away with the guineas without moving the bricks. Nevertheless, he turned round rather sharply on Mr. Tookey, when the zealous deputy, feeling that this was a view of the case peculiarly suited to a parish-clerk, carried it still farther, and doubted whether it was right to inquire into a robbery at all when the circumstances were so mysterious.

'As if,' concluded Mr. Tookey—'as if there was nothing but what could be made out by justices and constables.'

*is not for the sake*  
'Now, don't you be for overshooting the mark, Tookey,' said Mr. Macey, nodding his head aside, admonishingly. 'That's what you're allays at; if I throw a stone and hit, you think there's summat better than hitting, and you try to throw a stone beyond. What I said was against the tinder-box: I said nothing against justices and constables, for they're o' King George's making, and it 'ud be ill-becoming a man in a parish office to fly out again' King George.'

While these discussions were going on amongst the group outside the Rainbow, a higher consultation was being carried on within, under the presidency of Mr. Crackenthorp, the rector, assisted by Squire Cass and other substantial parishioners. It had just occurred to Mr. Snell, the landlord—he being, as he observed, a man accustomed to put two and two together—to connect with the tinder-box which, as deputy-constable, he himself had had the honourable distinction of finding, certain recollections of a pedlar who had called to drink at the house about a month before, and had actually stated that he carried a tinder-box about with him to light his pipe. Here, surely, was a clue to be followed out. And as memory, when duly impregnated with ascertained facts, is sometimes surprisingly fertile, Mr. Snell gradually recovered a vivid impression of the effect produced on him by the pedlar's countenance and conversation. He had a 'look with his eye' which fell unpleasantly on Mr. Snell's sensitive organism. To be sure, he didn't say anything particular—no, except that about the tinder-box—but it isn't what a man says, it's the way he says it. Moreover, he had a swarthy foreignness of complexion which boded little honesty.

'Did he wear ear-rings?' Mr. Crackenthorp wished to know, having some acquaintance with foreign customs.

'Well—stay—let me see,' said Mr. Snell, like a docile clairvoyante, who would really not make a mistake if she could help it. After stretching the corners of his mouth and contracting his eyes, as if he were trying to see the ear-rings, he appeared to give up the effort, and said, 'Well, he'd got ear-rings in his box to sell, so it's nat'ral to suppose he might wear 'em. But he called at every house, a'most, in the village: there's somebody else, mayhap, saw 'em in his ears, though I can't take upon me rightly to say.'

Mr. Snell was correct in his surmise, that somebody else would remember the pedlar's ear-rings. For, on the spread of inquiry among the villagers, it was stated with gathering emphasis, that the parson had wanted

to know whether the pedlar wore ear-rings in his ears, and an impression was created that a great deal depended on the eliciting of this fact. Of course every one who heard the question, not having any distinct image of the pedlar as *without* ear-rings, immediately had an image of him *with* ear-rings, larger or smaller, as the case might be; and the image was presently taken for a vivid recollection, so that the glazier's wife, a well-intentioned woman, not given to lying, and whose house was among the cleanest in the village, was ready to declare, as sure as ever she meant to take the sacrament, the very next Christmas that was ever coming, that she had seen big ear-rings, in the shape of the young moon, in the pedlar's two ears; while Jinny Oates, the cobbler's daughter, being a more imaginative person, stated not only that she had seen them too, but that they had made her blood creep, as it did at that very moment while there she stood.

Also, by way of throwing further light on this clue of the tinder-box, a collection was made of all the articles purchased from the pedlar at various houses and carried to the Rainbow to be exhibited there. In fact, there was a general feeling in the village, that for the clearing-up of this robbery there must be a great deal done at the Rainbow, and that no man need offer his wife an excuse for going there while it was the scene of severe public duties.

Some disappointment was felt, and perhaps a little indignation also, when it became known that Silas Marner, on being questioned by the Squire and the parson, had retained no other recollection of the pedlar than that he had called at his door, but had not entered his house, having turned away at once when Silas, holding the door ajar, had said that he wanted nothing. This had been Silas's testimony, though he clutched strongly at the idea of the pedlar's being the culprit, if only because it gave him a definite image of a whereabouts for his gold, after it had been taken away from its hiding-place: he could see it now in the pedlar's box. But it was observed with some irritation in the village, that any-

body but a 'blind creatur' like Marner would have seen the man prowling about, for how came he to leave his tinder-box in the ditch close by, if he hadn't been lingering there? Doubtless, he had made his observations when he saw Marner at the door. Anybody might know—and only look at him—that the weaver was a half-crazy miser. It was a wonder the pedlar hadn't murdered him; men of that sort, with rings in their ears, had been known for murderers often and often; there had been one tried at the 'sizes', not so long ago, but what there were people living who remembered it.

Godfrey Cass, indeed, entering the Rainbow during one of Mr. Snell's frequently repeated recitals of his testimony, had treated it lightly, stating that he himself had bought a pen-knife of the pedlar, and thought him a merry grinning fellow enough; it was all nonsense, he said, about the man's evil looks. But this was spoken of in the village as the random talk of youth, 'as if it was only Mr. Snell who had seen something odd about the pedlar!' On the contrary, there were at least half-a-dozen who were ready to go before Justice Malam, and give in much more striking testimony than any the landlord could furnish. It was to be hoped Mr. Godfrey would not go to Tarley and throw cold water on what Mr. Snell said there, and so prevent the justice from drawing up a warrant. He was suspected of intending this, when, after mid-day, he was seen setting off on horseback in the direction of Tarley.

But by this time Godfrey's interest in the robbery had faded before his growing anxiety about Dunstan and Wildfire, and he was going, not to Tarley, but to Bath-erley, unable to rest in uncertainty about them any longer. The possibility that Dunstan had played him the ugly trick of riding away with Wildfire, to return at the end of a month, when he had gambled away or otherwise squandered the price of the horse, was a fear that urged itself upon him more, even, than the thought of an accidental injury; and now that the dance at Mrs. Osgood's was past, he was irritated with himself that he had trusted his horse to Dunstan. Instead of:



trying to still his fears, he encouraged them, with that superstitious impression which clings to us all, that if we expect evil very strongly it is the less likely to come ; and when he heard a horse approaching at a trot, and saw a hat rising above a hedge beyond an angle of the lane, he felt as if his conjuration had succeeded. But no sooner did the horse come within sight, than his heart sank again. It was not Wildfire ; and in a few moments more he discerned that the rider was not Dunstan, but Bryce, who pulled up to speak, with a face that implied something disagreeable.

' Well, Mr. Godfrey, that's a lucky brother of yours, that Master Dunsey, isn't he ? '

' What do you mean ? ' said Godfrey, hastily.

' Why, hasn't he been home yet ? ' said Bryce.

' Home ? no. What has happened ? Be quick. What has he done with my horse ? '

' Ah, I thought it was yours, though he pretended you had parted with it to him.'

' Has he thrown him down and broken his knees ? ' said Godfrey, flushed with exasperation. *red face! angry*

' Worse than that,' said Bryce. ' You see, I'd made a bargain with him to buy the horse for a hundred and twenty—a swinging price, but I always liked the horse. And what does he do but go and stake him—fly at a hedge with stakes in it, atop of a bank with a ditch before it. The horse had been dead a pretty good while when he was found. So he hasn't been home since, has he ? '

' Home ? no,' said Godfrey, ' and he'd better keep away. Confound me for a fool ! I might have known this would be the end of it.'

' Well, to tell you the truth,' said Bryce, ' after I'd bargained for the horse, it did come into my head that he might be riding and selling the horse without your knowledge, for I didn't believe it was his own. I knew Master Dunsey was up to his tricks sometimes. But where can he be gone ? He's never been seen at Batherley. He couldn't have been hurt, for he must have walked off.'

'Hurt?' said Godfrey, bitterly. 'He'll never be hurt—he's made to hurt other people.'

'And so you *did* give him leave to sell the horse, eh?' said Bryce.

'Yes; I wanted to part with the horse—he was always a little too hard in the mouth for me,' said Godfrey; his pride making him wince under the idea that Bryce guessed the sale to be a matter of necessity. 'I was going to see after him—I thought some mischief had happened. I'll go back now,' he added, turning the horse's head, and wishing he could get rid of Bryce; for he felt that the long-dreaded crisis in his life was close upon him. 'You're coming on to Raveloe, aren't you?'

'Well, no, not now,' said Bryce. 'I *was* coming round there, for I had to go to Flitton, and I thought I might as well take you in my way, and just let you know all I knew myself about the horse. I suppose Master Dunsey didn't like to show himself till the ill news had blown over a bit. He's perhaps gone to pay a visit at the Three Crowns, by Whitbridge—I know he's fond of the house.'

'Perhaps he is,' said Godfrey, rather absently. Then rousing himself, he said, with an effort at carelessness, 'We shall hear of him soon enough, I'll be bound.'

'Well, here's my turning,' said Bryce, not surprised to perceive that Godfrey was rather 'down'; 'so I'll bid you good day, and wish I may bring you better news another time.'

Godfrey rode along slowly, representing to himself the scene of confession to his father from which he felt that there was now no longer any escape. The revelation about the money must be made the very next morning; and if he withheld the rest, Dunstan would be sure to come back shortly, and finding that he must bear the brunt of his father's anger, would tell the whole story out of spite, even though he had nothing to gain by it. There was one step, perhaps, by which he might still win Dunstan's silence and put off the evil day: he might tell his father that he had himself spent the money

paid to him by Fowler ; and as he had never been guilty of such an offence before, the affair would blow over after a little storming. But Godfrey could not bend himself to this. He felt that in letting Dunstan have the money, he had already been guilty of a breach of trust hardly less culpable than that of spending the money directly for his own behoof ; and yet there was a distinction between the two acts which made him feel that the one was so much more blackening than the other as to be intolerable to him.

‘ I don’t pretend to be a good fellow,’ he said to himself ; ‘ but I’m not a scoundrel—at least, I’ll stop short somewhere. I’ll bear the consequences of what I *have* done sooner than make believe I’ve done what I never would have done. I’d never have spent the money for my own pleasure—I was tortured into it.’

Through the remainder of this day Godfrey, with only occasional fluctuations, kept his will bent in the direction of a complete avowal to his father, and he withheld the story of Wildfire’s loss till the next morning, that it might serve him as an introduction to heavier matter. The old Squire was accustomed to his son’s frequent absence from home, and thought neither Dunstan’s nor Wildfire’s non-appearance a matter calling for remark. Godfrey said to himself again and again, that if he let slip this one opportunity of confession, he might never have another ; the revelation might be made even in a more odious way than by Dunstan’s malignity : *she* might come, as *she* had threatened to do. And then he tried to make the scene easier to himself by rehearsal : he made up his mind how he would pass from the admission of his weakness in letting Dunstan have the money to the fact that Dunstan had a hold on him which he had been unable to shake off, and how he would work up his father to expect something very bad before he told him the fact. The old Squire was an implacable man : he made resolutions in violent anger, but he was not to be moved from them after his anger had subsided—as fiery volcanic matters cool and harden into rock. Like many violent and implacable men, he

allowed evils to grow under favour of his own heedlessness, till they pressed upon him with exasperating force, and then he turned round with fierce severity and became unrelentingly hard. This was his system with his tenants: he allowed them to get into arrears, neglect their fences, reduce their stock, sell their straw, and otherwise go the wrong way,—and then, when he became short of money in consequence of this indulgence, he took the hardest measures and would listen to no appeal. Godfrey knew all this, and felt it with the greater force because he had constantly suffered annoyance from witnessing his father's sudden fits of unrelentingness, for which his own habitual irresolution deprived him of all sympathy. (He was not critical on the faulty indulgence which preceded these fits; *that* seemed to him natural enough.) Still there was just the chance, Godfrey thought, that his father's pride might see this marriage in a light that would induce him to hush it up, rather than turn his son out and make the family the talk of the country for ten miles round.

This was the view of the case that Godfrey managed to keep before him pretty closely till midnight, and he went to sleep thinking that he had done with inward debating. But when he awoke in the still morning darkness he found it impossible to reawaken his evening thoughts; it was as if they had been tired out and were not to be roused to further work. Instead of arguments for confession, he could now feel the presence of nothing but its evil consequences: the old dread of disgrace came back—the old shrinking from the thought of raising a hopeless barrier between himself and Nancy—the old disposition to rely on chances which might be favourable to him, and save him from betrayal. Why, after all, should he cut off the hope of them by his own act? He had seen the matter in a wrong light yesterday. He had been in a rage with Dunstan, and had thought of nothing but a thorough break-up of their mutual understanding; but what it would be really wisest for him to do, was to try and soften his father's anger against

Dunsey, and keep things as nearly as possible in their old condition. If Dunsey did not come back for a few days (and Godfrey did not know but that the rascal had enough money in his pocket to enable him to keep away still longer), everything might blow over.

## CHAPTER IX.

GODFREY rose and took his own breakfast earlier than usual, but lingered in the wainscoted parlour till his younger brothers had finished their meal and gone out, awaiting his father, who always went out and had a walk with his managing-man before breakfast. Every one breakfasted at a different hour in the Red House, and the Squire was always the latest, giving a long chance to a rather feeble morning appetite before he tried it. The table had been spread with substantial entables nearly two hours before he presented himself—a tall, stout man of sixty, with a face in which the knit brow and rather hard glance seemed contradicted by the slack and feeble mouth. His person showed marks of habitual neglect, his dress was slovenly; and yet there was something in the presence of the old Squire distinguishable from that of the ordinary farmers in the parish, who were perhaps every whit as refined as he, but, having slouched their way through life with a consciousness of being in the vicinity of their ‘betters,’ wanted that self-possession and authoritativeness of voice and carriage, which belonged to a man who thought of superiors as remote existences, with whom he had personally little more to do than with America or the stars. The Squire had been used to parish homage all his life, used to the presupposition that his family, his tankards, and everything that was his, were the oldest and best; and as he never associated with any gentry higher than himself, his opinion was not disturbed by comparison.

He glanced at his son as he entered the room, and said, ‘What, sir! haven’t you had your breakfast yet?’

but there was no pleasant morning greeting between them; not because of any unfriendliness, but because the sweet flower of courtesy is not a growth of such homes as the Red House.

'Yes, sir,' said Godfrey, 'I've had my breakfast, but I was waiting to speak to you.'

'Ah! well,' said the Squire, throwing himself in-differently into his chair, and speaking in a ponderous coughing fashion, which was felt in Raveloe to be a sort of privilege of his rank, while he cut a piece of beef, and held it up before the deer-hound that had come in with him, 'Ring the bell for my ale, will you? You youngsters' business is your own pleasure, mostly. There's no hurry about it for anybody but yourselves.'

The Squire's life was quite as idle as his sons', but it was a fiction kept up by himself and his contemporaries in Raveloe that youth was exclusively the period of folly, and that their aged wisdom was constantly in a state of endurance mitigated by sarcasm. Godfrey waited, before he spoke again, until the ale had been brought and the door closed—an interval during which Fleet, the deer-hound, had consumed enough bits of beef to make a poor man's holiday dinner.

'There's been a cursed piece of ill-luck with Wildfire,' he began; 'happened the day before yesterday.'

'What! broke his knees?' said the Squire, after taking a draught of ale. 'I thought you knew how to ride better than that, sir. I never threw a horse down in my life. If I had, I might ha' whistled for another, for my father wasn't quite so ready to unstring as some other fathers I know of. But they must turn over a new leaf—they must. What with mortgages and arrears, I'm as short o' cash as a roadside pauper. And that fool Kimble says the newspaper's talking about peace. Why, the country wouldn't have a leg to stand on. Prices 'ud run down like a jack, and I should never get my arrears, not if I sold all the fellows up. And there's that damned Fowler, I won't put up with him any longer; I've told Winthrop to go to Cox this very day. The lying scoundrel told me he'd be sure to pay

to tell,' said the Squire, with a sudden acuteness which startled Godfrey, who felt his heart beat violently at the nearness of his father's guess. The sudden alarm pushed him on to take the next step—a very slight impulse suffices for that on a downward road.

'Why, sir,' he said, trying to speak with careless ease, 'it was a little affair between me and Dunsey; it's no matter to anybody else. It's hardly worth while to pry into young men's fooleries: it wouldn't have made any difference to you, sir, if I'd not had the bad luck to lose Wildfire. I should have paid you the money.'

'Fooleries! Pshaw! it's time you'd done with fooleries. And I'd have you know, sir, you *must* ha' done with 'em,' said the Squire, frowning and casting an angry glance at his son. 'Your goings-on are not what I shall find money for any longer. There's my grandfather had his stables full o' horses, and kept a good house too, and in worse times, by what I can make out; and so might I, if I hadn't four good-for-nothing fellows to hang on me like horse-leeches. I've been too good a father to you all—that's what it is. But I shall pull up, sir.' *She'll come to be so wild, & in fact*

Godfrey was silent. He was not likely to be very penetrating in his judgements, but he had always had a sense that his father's indulgence had not been kindness, and had had a vague longing for some discipline that would have checked his own errant weakness, and helped his better will. The Squire ate his bread and meat hastily, took a deep draught of ale, then turned his chair from the table, and began to speak again.

'It'll be all the worse for you, you know—you'd need try and help me keep things together.'

'Well, sir, I've often offered to take the management of things, but you know you've taken it ill always, and seemed to think I wanted to push you out of your place.'

'I know nothing o' your offering or o' my taking it ill,' said the Squire, whose memory consisted in certain strong impressions unmodified by detail; 'but I know, one while you seemed to be thinking o' marrying, and

*of me too*

I didn't offer to put any obstacles in your way, as some fathers would. I'd as lieve you married Lammeter's daughter as anybody. I suppose, if I'd said you nay, you'd ha' kept on with it; but, for want o' contradiction you've changed your mind. You're a shilly-shally fellow: you take after your poor mother. She never had a will of her own; a woman has no call for one, if she's got a proper man for her husband. But *your* wife had need have one, for you hardly know your own mind enough to make both your legs walk one way. The lass hasn't said downright she won't have you, has she? 'Oh, yes, she has.'

'No,' said Godfrey, feeling very hot and uncomfortable; 'but I don't think she will.'

'Think! why, haven't you the courage to ask her? Do you stick to it, you want to have *her*—that's the thing?'

'There's no other woman I want to marry,' said Godfrey, evasively.

'Well, then, let me make the offer for you, that's all, if you haven't the pluck to do it yourself. Lammeter isn't likely to be loath for his daughter to marry into *my* family, I should think. And as for the pretty lass, she wouldn't have her cousin—and there's nobody else, as I see, could ha' stood in your way.'

'I'd rather let it be, please sir, at present,' said Godfrey, in alarm. 'I think she's a little offended with me just now, and I should like to speak for myself. A man must manage these things for himself.'

'Well, speak then and manage it, and see if you can't turn over a new leaf. That's what a man must do when he thinks o' marrying.'

'I don't see how I can think of it at present, sir. You wouldn't like to settle me on one of the farms, I suppose, and I don't think she'd come to live in this house with all my brothers. It's a different sort of life to what she's been used to.'

'Not come to live in this house? Don't tell me. You ask her, that's all,' said the Squire, with a short, scornful laugh.



a subject of remark : he had once before had a quarrel with his father, and had gone off, nobody knew whither, to return at the end of six weeks, take up his old quarters unforbidden, and <sup>never</sup> swagger as usual. His own family, who equally expected this issue, <sup>never</sup> with the sole difference that the Squire was determined this time to forbid him the old quarters, never mentioned his absence ; and when his uncle Kimble or Mr. Osgood noticed it, the story of his having killed Wildfire, and committed some offence against his father, was enough to prevent surprise. To connect the fact of Dunsey's disappearance with that of the robbery occurring on the same day, lay quite away from the track of every one's thought—even Godfrey's, who had better reason than any one else to know what his brother was capable of. He remembered no mention of the weaver between them since the time, twelve years ago, when it was their boyish sport to deride him ; and, besides, his imagination constantly created an *alibi* for Dunstan : he saw him continually in some congenial haunt, to which he had walked off on leaving Wildfire—saw him sponging on chance acquaintances, and meditating a return home to the old amusement of tormenting his elder brother. Even if any brain in Raveloe had put the said two facts together, I doubt whether a combination so injurious to the prescriptive respectability of a family with a mural monument and venerable tankards, would not have been suppressed as of unsound tendency. But Christmas puddings, brawn, and abundance of spirituous liquors, throwing the mental originality into the channel of nightmare, are great preservatives against a dangerous spontaneity of waking thought.

When the robbery was talked of at the Rainbow and elsewhere, in good company, the balance continued to waver between the rational explanation founded on the tinder-box, and the theory of an impenetrable mystery that mocked investigation. The advocates of the tinder-box-and-pedlar view considered the other side a muddle-headed and credulous set, who, because they themselves were wall-eyed, supposed everybody else to

have the same blank outlook ; and the adherents of the inexplicable, more than hinted that their antagonists were animals inclined to crow before they had found any corn—mere skimming-dishes in point of depth—whose clear-sightedness consisted in supposing there was nothing behind a barn-door because they couldn't see through it ; so that, though their controversy did not serve to elicit the fact concerning the robbery, it elicited some true opinions of collateral importance.

But while poor Silas's loss served thus to brush the slow current of Raveloe conversation, Silas himself was feeling the withering desolation of that bereavement, about which his neighbours were arguing at their ease. To any one who had observed him before he lost his gold, it might have seemed that so withered and shrunk a life as his could hardly be susceptible of a bruise, could hardly endure any subtraction but such as would put an end to it altogether. But in reality it had been an eager life, filled with immediate purpose, which fenced him in from the wide, cheerless unknown. It had been a clinging life ; and though the object round which its fibres had clung was a dead disrupted thing, it satisfied the need for clinging. But now the fence was broken down—the support was snatched away. Marner's thoughts could no longer move in their old round, and were baffled by a blank like that which meets a plodding ant when the earth has broken away on its homeward path. The loom was there, and the weaving, and the growing pattern in the cloth ; but the bright treasure in the hole under his feet was gone ; the prospect of handling and counting it was gone : the evening had no phantasm of delight to still the poor soul's craving. The thought of the money he would get by his actual work could bring no joy, for its meagre image was only a fresh reminder of his loss ; and hope was too heavily crushed by the sudden blow for his imagination to dwell on the growth of a new hoard from that small beginning.

He filled up the blank with grief. As he sat weaving, he every now and then moaned low, like one in pain : it was the sign that his thoughts had come round again

to the sudden chasm—to the empty evening-time. And all the evening, as he sat in his loneliness by his dull fire, he leaned his elbows on his knees, and clasped his head with his hands, and moaned very low—not as one who seeks to be heard.

And yet he was not utterly forsaken in his trouble. The repulsion Marner had always created in his neighbours was partly dissipated by the new light in which this misfortune had shown him. Instead of a man who had more cunning than honest folks could come by, and, what was worse, had not the inclination to use that cunning in a neighbourly way, it was now apparent that Silas had not cunning enough to keep his own. He was generally spoken of as a 'poor mushed creatur' <sup>انسان</sup> and that avoidance of his neighbours, which had before been referred to his ill-will, and to a probable addiction to worse company, was now considered mere craziness.

This change to a kindlier feeling was shown in various ways. The odour of Christmas cooking being on the wind, it was the season when superfluous pork and black puddings are suggestive of charity in well-to-do families; and Silas's misfortune had brought him uppermost in the memory of housekeepers like Mrs. Osgood. Mr. Crackenthorp, too, while he admonished Silas that his money had probably been taken from him because he thought too much of it, and never came to church, enforced the doctrine by a present of pigs' pettitoes, well calculated to dissipate unfounded prejudices against the clerical character. Neighbours, who had nothing but verbal consolation to give, showed a disposition not only to greet Silas, and discuss his misfortune at some length when they encountered him in the village, but also to take the trouble of calling at his cottage, and getting him to repeat all the details on the very spot; and then they would try to cheer him by saying, 'Well, Master Marner, you're no worse off nor other poor folks, after all; and if you was to be crippled, the parish 'ud give you a 'lowance.'

I suppose one reason why we are seldom able to comfort our neighbours with our words is, that our good-

will gets adulterated, in spite of ourselves, before it can pass our lips. We can send black puddings and petti-  
toes without giving them a flavour of our egoism; but language is a stream that is almost sure to smack of a mingled soil. There was a fair proportion of kindness in Raveloe; but it was often of a beery and bungling sort, and took the shape least allied to the complimentary and hypocritical. <sup>it was as far as possible free from flattery</sup>

Mr. Macey, for example, coming one evening expressly to let Silas know that recent events had given him the advantage of standing more favourably in the opinion of a man whose judgement was not formed lightly, opened the conversation by saying, as soon as he had seated himself and adjusted his thumbs—

‘Come, Master Marner, why, you’ve no call to sit a-moaning. You’re a deal better off to ha’ lost your money, nor to ha’ kep it by foul means. I used to think, when you first come into these parts, as you were no better nor you should be; you were younger a deal than what you are now; but you were allays a staring, white-faced creatur, partly like a bald-faced calf, as I may say. But there’s no knowing: it isn’t every queer-looksed thing as Old Harry’s had the making of—I mean, speaking o’ toads and such; for they’re often harmless, like, and useful against varmin. And it’s pretty much the same wi’ you, as fur as I can see. Though as to the yarbs and stuff to cure the breathing, if you brought that sort o’ knowledge from distant parts, you might ha’ been a bit freer of it. And if the knowledge wasn’t well come by, why, you might ha’ made up for it by coming to church reg’lar; for, as for the children as the Wise Woman charmed, I’ve been at the christening of ’em again and again, and they took the water just as well. And that’s reasonable; for if Old Harry’s a mind to do a bit o’ kindness for a holiday, like, who’s got anything against it? That’s my thinking; and I’ve been clerk of this parish forty year, and I know, when the parson and me does the cussing of a Ash-Wednesday, there’s no cussing o’ folks as have a mind to be cured without a doctor, let Kimble

say what he will. And so, Master Marner, as I was saying—for there's windings i' things as they may carry you to the fur end o' the prayer-book afore you get back to 'em—my advice is, as you keep up your sperrits; for as for thinking you're a deep 'un, and ha' got more inside you nor 'ull bear daylight, I'm not o' that opinion at all, and so I tell the neighbours. For, says I, you talk o' Master Marner making out a tale—why, it's nonsense, that is: it 'ud take a 'cute man to make a tale like that; and, says I, he looked as scared as a rabbit.'

During this discursive address Silas had continued motionless in his previous attitude, leaning his elbows on his knees, and pressing his hands against his head. Mr. Macey, not doubting that he had been listened to, paused, in the expectation of some appreciatory reply, but Marner remained silent. He had a sense that the old man meant to be good-natured and neighbourly; but the kindness fell on him as sunshine falls on the wretched—he had no heart to taste it, and felt that it was very far off him.

'Come, Master Marner, have you got nothing to say tō that?' said Mr. Macey at last, with a slight accent of impatience.

'Oh,' said Marner, slowly, shaking his head between his hands, 'I thank you—thank you—kindly.'

'Aye, aye, to be sure: I thought you would,' said Mr. Macey; 'and my advice is—have you got a Sunday suit?'

'No,' said Marner.

'I doubted it was so,' said Mr. Macey. 'Now, let me advise you to get a Sunday suit: there's Tookey, he's a poor creatur, but he's got my tailoring business, and some o' my money in it, and he shall make a suit at a low price, and give you trust, and then you can come to church, and be a bit neighbourly. Why you've never heard me say "Amen" since you come into these parts, and I recommend you to lose no time, for it'll be poor work when Tookey has it all to himself, for I mayn't be equil to stand i' the desk at all, come another winter.' Here Mr. Macey paused, perhaps expecting some sign

of emotion in his hearer ; but not observing any, he went on. ' And as for the money for the suit o' clothes, why, you get a matter of a pound a-week at your weaving, Master Marner, and you're a young man, eh, for all you look so mushed. Why, you couldn't ha' been five-and-twenty when you come into these parts, eh ? '

Silas started a little at the change to a questioning tone, and answered mildly, ' I don't know ; I can't rightly say—it's a long while since.'

After receiving such an answer as this, it is not surprising that Mr. Macey observed, later on in the evening at the Rainbow, that Marner's head was 'all of a muddle,' and that it was to be doubted if he ever knew when Sunday came round, which showed him a worse heathen than many a dog.

Another of Silas's comforters, besides Mr. Macey, came to him with a mind highly charged on the same topic. This was Mrs. Winthrop, the wheelwright's wife. The inhabitants of Raveloe were not severely regular in their churchgoing, and perhaps there was hardly a person in the parish who would not have held that to go to church every Sunday in the calendar would have shown a greedy desire to stand well with Heaven, and get an undue advantage over their neighbours—a wish to be better than the 'common run,' that would have implied a reflection on those who had had godfathers and godmothers as well as themselves, and had an equal right to the burying-service. At the same time, it was understood to be requisite for all who were not household servants, or young men, to take the sacrament at one of the great festivals : Squire Cass himself took it on Christmas-day ; while those who were held to be 'good livers' went to church with a greater, though still with moderate frequency.

Mrs. Winthrop was one of these : she was in all respects a woman of scrupulous conscience, so eager for duties, that life seemed to offer them too scantily unless she rose at half-past four, though this threw a scarcity of work over the more advanced hours of the morning, which it was a constant problem with her to remove.

Yet she had not the vixenish temper which is sometimes supposed to be a necessary condition of such habits : she was a very mild, patient woman, whose nature it was to seek out all the sadder and more serious elements of life, and pasture her mind upon them. She was the person always first thought of in Raveloe when there was illness or death in a family, when leeches were to be applied, or there was a sudden disappointment in a monthly nurse. She was a 'comfortable woman'—good-looking, fresh-complexioned, having her lips always slightly screwed, as if she felt herself in a sick-room with the doctor or the clergyman present. But she was never whimpering ; no one had seen her shed tears ; she was simply grave and inclined to shake her head and sigh, almost imperceptibly, like a funereal mourner who is not a relation. It seemed surprising that Ben Winthrop, who loved his quart-pot and his joke, got along so well with Dolly ; but she took her husband's jokes and joviality as patiently as everything else, considering that 'men *would* be so,' and viewing the stronger sex in the light of animals whom it had pleased Heaven to make naturally troublesome, like bulls and turkey-cocks.

This good wholesome woman could hardly fail to have her mind drawn strongly towards Silas Marner, now that he appeared in the light of a sufferer ; and one Sunday afternoon she took her little boy Aaron with her, and went to call on Silas, carrying in her hand some small lard-cakes, flat paste-like articles, much esteemed in Raveloe. Aaron, an apple-cheeked youngster of seven, with a clean starched frill, which looked like a plate for the apples, needed all his adventurous curiosity to embolden him against the possibility that the big-eyed weaver might do him some bodily injury ; and his dubiety was much increased when, on arriving at the Stone-pits, they heard the mysterious sound of the loom.

'Ah, it is as I thought,' said Mrs. Winthrop, sadly.

They had to knock loudly before Silas heard them ; but when he did come to the door, he showed no im-

patience, as he would once have done, at a visit that had been unasked for and unexpected. Formerly, his heart had been as a locked casket with its treasure inside; but now the casket was empty, and the lock was broken. Left groping in darkness, with his prop. utterly gone, Silas had inevitably a sense, though a dull and half-despairing one, that if any help came to him it must come from without; and there was a slight stirring of expectation at the sight of his fellow-men, a faint consciousness of dependence on their goodwill. He opened the door wide to admit Dolly, but without otherwise returning her greeting than by moving the armchair a few inches as a sign that she was to sit down in it. Dolly, as soon as she was seated, removed the white cloth that covered her lard-cakes, and said in her gravest way—

‘I’d a baking yisterday, Master Marner, and the lard-cakes turned out better nor common, and I’d ha’ asked you to accept some, if you’d thought well. I don’t eat such things myself, for a bit o’ bread’s what I like from one year’s end to the other; but men’s stomachs are made so comical, they want a change—they do, I know, God help ‘em.’ *so strangely constituted*

Dolly sighed gently as she held out the cakes to Silas, who thanked her kindly, and looked very close at them, absently, being accustomed to look so at everything he took into his hand—<sup>watched</sup> eyed all the while by the wondering bright orbs of the small Aaron, who had made an outwork of his mother’s chair, and was peeping round from behind it.

‘There’s letters pricked on ‘em,’ said Dolly. ‘I can’t read ‘em myself, and there’s nobody, not Mr. Macey himself, rightly knows what they mean; but they’ve a good meaning, for they’re the same as is on the pulpit-cloth at church. What are they, Aaron, my dear?’

Aaron retreated completely behind his outwork.

‘Oh, go, that’s naughty,’ said his mother, mildly. ‘Well, whatever the letters are, they’ve a good meaning; and it’s a stamp as has been in our house, Ben says, ever since he was a little un, and his mother used to put



it on the cakes, and I've allays put it on too; for if there's any good, we've need of it i' this world.'

'It's I. H. S.' said Silas, at which proof of learning Aaron peeped round the chair again.

'Well, to be sure, you can read 'em off,' said Dolly. 'Ben's read 'em to me many and many a time, but they slip out o' my mind again; the more's the pity, for they're good letters, else they wouldn't be in the church; and so I prick 'em on all the loaves and all the cakes, though sometimes they won't hold, because o' the rising—for, as I said, if there's any good to be got, we've need on it i' this world—that we have; and I hope they'll bring good to you, Master Marner, for it's wi' that will I brought you the cakes; and you see the letters have held better nor common.'

Silas was as unable to interpret the letters as Dolly, but there was no possibility of misunderstanding the desire to give comfort that made itself heard in her quiet tones. He said, with more feeling than before—'Thank you—thank you kindly.' But he laid down the cake and seated himself absently—drearily unconscious of any distinct benefit towards which the cake and the letters, or even Dolly's kindness, could tend for him.

'Ah, if there's good anywhere, we've need of it,' repeated Dolly, who did not lightly forsake a serviceable phrase. She looked at Silas pityingly as she went on. 'But you didn't hear the church-bells this morning, Master Marner. I doubt you didn't know it was Sunday. Living so lone here, you lose your count, I daresay; and then, when your loom makes a noise, you can't hear the bells, more partic'lar now the frost kills the sound.'

'Yes, I did; I heard 'em,' said Silas, to whom Sunday bells were a mere accident of the day, and not part of its sacredness. There had been no bells in Lantern Yard.

'Dear heart!' said Dolly, pausing before she spoke again. 'But what a pity it is you should work of a Sunday, and not clean yourself—if you *didn't* go to church; for if you'd a roasting bit, it might be as you

couldn't leave it, being a lone man. But there's the bakehus, if you could make up your mind to spend a twopence on the oven now and then,—not every week, in course—I shouldn't like to do that myself,—you might carry your bit o' dinner there, for it's nothing but right to have a bit o' summat hot of a Sunday, and not to make it as you can't know your dinner from Saturday. But now, upo' Christmas-day, this blessed Christmas as is ever coming, if you was to take your dinner to the bakehus, and go to church, and see the holly and the yew, and hear the anthim, and then take the sacramen', you'd be a deal the better, and you'd know which end you stood on, and you could put your trust i' Them as knows better nor we do, seein' you'd ha' done what it lies on us all to do.'

Dolly's exhortation, which was an unusually long effort of speech for her, was uttered in the soothing persuasive tone with which she would have tried to prevail on a sick man to take his medicine, or a basin of gruel for which he had no appetite. Silas had never before been closely urged on the point of his absence from church, which had only been thought of as a part of his general queerness; and he was too direct and simple to evade Dolly's appeal. *exhortation*

'Nay, nay,' he said, 'I know nothing o' church. I've never been to church.'

'No!' said Dolly, in a low tone of wonderment. Then bethinking herself of Silas's advent from an unknown country, she said, 'Could it ha' been as they'd no church where you was born?'

'Oh, yes,' said Silas, meditatively, sitting in his usual posture of leaning on his knees, and supporting his head. 'There was churches—a many—it was a big town. But I knew nothing of 'em—I went to chapel.'

Dolly was much puzzled at this new word, but she was rather afraid of inquiring further, lest 'chapel' might mean some haunt of wickedness. After a little thought, she said—

'Well, Master Marner, it's niver too late to turn over a new leaf, and if you've niver had no church, there's

no telling the good it 'll do you. For I feel so set up and comfortable as niver was, when I've been and heard the prayers, and the singing to the praise and glory o' God, as Mr. Macey gives out—and Mr. Crackenthorp saying good words, and more partic'lar on Sacramen' Day; and if a bit o' trouble comes, I feel as I can put up wi' it, for I've looked for help i' the right quarter, and gev myself up to Them as we must all give ourselves up to at the last; and if we'n done our part, it isn't to be believed as Them as are above us 'ull be worse nor we are, and come short o' Theirn.'

Poor Dolly's exposition of her simple Raveloe theology fell rather unmeaningly on Silas's ears, for there was no word in it that could rouse a memory of what he had known as religion, and his comprehension was quite baffled by the plural pronoun, which was no heresy of Dolly's, but only her way of avoiding a presumptuous familiarity. He remained silent, not feeling inclined to assent to the part of Dolly's speech which he fully understood—her recommendation that he should go to church. Indeed, Silas was so unaccustomed to talk beyond the brief questions and answers necessary for the transaction of his simple business, that words did not easily come to him without the urgency of a distinct purpose.

But now, little Aaron, having become used to the weaver's awful presence, had advanced to his mother's side, and Silas, seeming to notice him for the first time, tried to return Dolly's signs of goodwill by offering the lad a bit of lard-cake. Aaron shrank back a little, and rubbed his head against his mother's shoulder, but still thought the piece of cake worth the risk of putting his hand out for it.

'Oh, for shame, Aaron,' said his mother, taking him on her lap, however; 'why, you don't want cake again yet awhile. He's wonderful hearty,' she went on, with a little sigh—'that he is, God knows. He's my youngest, and we spoil him sadly, for either me or the father must allays hev him in our sight—that we must.'

She stroked Aaron's brown head, and thought it must

do Master Marner good to see such a 'pictur of a child.' But Marner, on the other side of the hearth, saw the neat-featured rosy face as a mere dim round, with two dark spots in it.

'And he's got a voice like a bird—you wouldn't think.' Dolly went on; 'he can sing a Christmas carril as his father's taught him; and I take it for a token as he'll come to good, as he can learn the good tunes so quick. Come, Aaron, stan' up and sing the carril to Master Marner, come.'

Aaron replied by rubbing his forehead against his mother's shoulder.

'Oh, that's naughty,' said Dolly, gently. 'Stan' up, when mother tells you, and let me hold the cake till you've done.'

Aaron was not indisposed to display his talents, even to an ogre, under protecting circumstances; and after a few more signs of coyness, consisting chiefly in rubbing the backs of his hands over his eyes, and then peeping between them at Master Marner, to see if he looked anxious for the 'carril,' he at length allowed his head to be duly adjusted, and standing behind the table, which let him appear above it only as far as his broad frill, so that he looked like a cherubic head untroubled with a body, he began with a clear chirp, and in a melody that had the rhythm of an industrious hammer,

'God rest you, merry gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Was born on Christmas-day.'

Dolly listened with a devout look, glancing at Marner in some confidence that this strain would help to allure him to church.

'That's Christmas music,' she said, when Aaron had ended, and had secured his piece of cake again. 'There's no other music equil to the Christmas music—"Hark the erol angils sing." And you may judge what it is at church, Master Marner, with the bassoon and the voices, as you can't help thinking you've got to a better

place a'ready—for I wouldn't speak ill o' this world, seeing as Them put us in it as knows best; but what wi' the drink, and the quarrelling, and the bad illnesses, and the hard dying, as I've seen times and times, one 's thankful to hear of a better. The boy sings pretty, don't he, Master Marner ?'

'Yes,' said Silas, absently, 'very pretty.'

The Christmas carol, with its hammer-like rhythm, had fallen on his ears as strange music, quite unlike a hymn, and could have none of the effect Dolly contemplated. But he wanted to show her that he was grateful, and the only mode that occurred to him was to offer Aaron a bit more cake.

'Oh, no, thank you, Master Marner,' said Dolly, holding down Aaron's willing hands. 'We must be going home now. And so I wish you good-bye, Master Marner; and if you ever feel anyways bad in your inside, as you can't fend for yourself, I'll come and clean up for you, and get you a bit o' victual, and willing. But I beg and pray of you to leave off weaving of a Sunday, for it's bad for soul and body—and the money as comes i' that way 'ull be a bad bed to lie down on at the last, if it doesn't fly away, nobody knows where, like the white frost. And you 'll excuse me being that free with you, Master Marner, for I wish you well—I do. Make your bow, Aaron.'

Silas said 'Good-bye, and thank you, kindly,' as he opened the door for Dolly, but he couldn't help feeling relieved when she was gone—relieved that he might weave again and moan at his ease. Her simple view of life and its comforts, by which she had tried to cheer him, was only like a report of unknown objects, which his imagination could not fashion. The fountains of human love and divine faith had not yet been unlocked and his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference, that its little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly against dark obstruction.

And so, notwithstanding the honest persuasions of Mr. Macey and Dolly Winthrop, Silas spent his Christmas-day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of

heart, though the meat had come to him as a neighbourly present. In the morning he looked out on the black frost that seemed to press cruelly on every blade of grass, while the half-icy red pool shivered under the bitter wind; but towards evening the snow began to fall, and curtained from him even that dreary outlook, shutting him close up with his narrow grief. And he sat in his robbed home through the livelong evening, not caring to close his shutters or lock his door, pressing his head between his hands and moaning, till the cold grasped him and told him that his fire was grey.

Nobody in this world but himself knew that he was the same Silas Marner who had once loved his fellow with tender love, and trusted in an unseen goodness. Even to himself that past experience had become dim.

But in Raveloe village the bells rang merrily, and the church was fuller than all through the rest of the year, with red faces among the abundant dark-green boughs—faces prepared for a longer service than usual by an odorous breakfast of toast and ale. Those green boughs, the hymn and anthem never heard but at Christmas—even the Athanasian Creed, which was discriminated from the others only as being longer and of exceptional virtue, since it was only read on rare occasions—brought a vague exulting sense, for which the grown men could as little have found words as the children, that something great and mysterious had been done for them in heaven above, and in earth below, which they were appropriating by their presence. And then the red faces made their way through the black biting frost to their own homes, feeling themselves free for the rest of the day to eat, drink, and be merry, and using that Christian freedom without diffidence.

At Squire Cass's family party that day nobody mentioned Dunstan—nobody was sorry for his absence, or feared it would be too long. The doctor and his wife, uncle and aunt Kimble, were there, and the annual Christmas talk was carried through without any omissions, rising to the climax of Mr. Kimble's experience when he walked the London hospitals thirty years back,

together with striking professional anecdotes then gathered. Whereupon cards followed, with aunt Kimble's annual failure to follow suit, and uncle Kimble's irascibility concerning the odd trick which was rarely explicable to him, when it was not on his side, without a general visitation of tricks to see that they were formed on sound principles: the whole being accompanied by a strong steaming odour of spirits-and-water.

But the party on Christmas-day, being a strictly family party, was not the pre-eminently brilliant celebration of the season at the Red House. It was the great dance on New Year's Eve that made the glory of Squire Cass's hospitality, as of his forefathers', time out of mind. This was the occasion when all the society of Raveloe and Tarley, whether old acquaintances separated by long rutty distances, or cooled acquaintances separated by misunderstandings concerning runaway calves, or acquaintances founded on intermittent condescension, counted on meeting and on comporting themselves with mutual appropriateness. This was the occasion on which fair dames who came on pillions sent their bandboxes before them, supplied with more than their evening costume; for the feast was not to end with a single evening, like a paltry entertainment, where the whole supply of eatables is put on the table at once, and bedding is scanty. The Red House was provisioned as if for a siege; and as for the spare feather-beds ready to be laid on floors, they were as plentiful as might naturally be expected in a family that had killed its own geese for many generations.

Godfrey Cass was looking forward to this New Year's Eve with a foolish reckless longing, that made him half deaf to his importunate companion, Anxiety.

'Dunsey will be coming home soon: there will be a great blow-up, and how will you bribe his spite to silence?' said Anxiety.

'Oh, he won't come home before New Year's Eve, perhaps,' said Godfrey; 'and I shall sit by Nancy then, and dance with her, and get a kind look from her in spite of herself.'

'But money is wanted in another quarter,' said Anxiety, in a louder voice, 'and how will you get it without selling your mother's diamond pin? And if you don't get it . . . ?'

'Well, but something may happen to make things easier. At any rate, there's one pleasure for me close at hand: Nancy is coming.'

'Yes, and suppose your father should bring matters to a pass that will oblige you to decline marrying her—and to give your reasons?'

'Hold your tongue, and don't worry me. I can see Nancy's eyes, just as they will look at me, and feel her hand in mine already.'

But Anxiety went on, though in noisy Christmas company; refusing to be utterly quieted even by much drinking.

## CHAPTER XI.

SOME women, I grant, would not appear to advantage seated on a pillion, and attired in a drab joseph and a drab beaver-bonnet, with a crown resembling a small stew-pan; for a garment suggesting a coachman's greatcoat, cut out under an exiguity of cloth that would only allow of miniature capes, is not well adapted to conceal deficiencies of contour, nor is drab a colour that will throw sallow cheeks into lively contrast. It was all the greater triumph to Miss Nancy Lammeter's beauty that she looked thoroughly bewitching in that costume, as, seated on a pillion behind her tall, erect father, she held one arm round him, and looked down, with open-eyed anxiety, at the treacherous snow-covered pools and puddles, which sent up formidable splashings of mud under the stamp of Dobbin's foot. A painter would, perhaps, have preferred her in those moments when she was free from self-consciousness; but certainly the bloom on her cheeks was at its highest point of contrast with the surrounding drab when she arrived at the door of the Red



House, and saw Mr. Godfrey Cass ready to lift her from the pillion. She wished her sister Priscilla had come up at the same time with the servant, for then she would have contrived that Mr. Godfrey should have lifted off Priscilla first, and, in the meantime, she would have persuaded her father to go round to the horseblock instead of alighting at the door-steps. It was very painful, when you had made it quite clear to a young man that you were determined not to marry him, however much he might wish it, that he would still continue to pay you marked attentions; besides, why didn't he always show the same attentions, if he meant them sincerely, instead of being so strange as Mr. Godfrey Cass was, sometimes behaving as if he didn't want to speak to her, and taking no notice of her for weeks and weeks, and then, all on a sudden, almost making love again? Moreover, it was quite plain he had no real love for her, else he would not let people have *that* to say of him which they did say. Did he suppose that Miss Nancy Lammeter was to be won by any man, squire or no squire, who led a bad life? That was not what she had been used to see in her own father, who was the soberest and best man in that country-side, only a little hot and hasty now and then, if things were not done to the minute. *well, when he wanted the*

All these thoughts rushed through Miss Nancy's mind, in their habitual succession, in the moments between her first sight of Mr. Godfrey Cass standing at the door and her own arrival there. Happily, the Squire came out too, and gave a loud greeting to the father, so that, somehow, under cover of this noise, she seemed to find concealment for her confusion and neglect of any suitably formal behaviour, while she was being lifted from the pillion by strong arms, which seemed to find her ridiculously small and light. And there was the best reason for hastening into the house at once, since the snow was beginning to fall again, and threatening an unpleasant journey for such guests as were still on the road. These were a small minority; for already the afternoon was beginning to decline, and there would not

be too much time for the ladies who came from a distance to attire themselves in readiness for the early tea which was to inspirit them for the dance.

There was a buzz of voices through the house, as Miss Nancy entered, mingled with the scrape of a fiddle preluding in the kitchen; but the Lammeters were guests whose arrival had evidently been thought of so much that it had been watched for from the windows, for Mrs. Kimble, who did the honours at the Red House on these great occasions, came forward to meet Miss Nancy in the hall, and conduct her upstairs. Mrs. Kimble was the Squire's sister, as well as the doctor's wife—a double dignity, with which her diameter was in direct proportion; so that, a journey up-stairs being rather fatiguing to her, she did not oppose Miss Nancy's request to be allowed to find her way alone to the Blue Room, where the Miss Lammeters' bandboxes had been deposited on their arrival in the morning.

There was hardly a bedroom in the house where feminine compliments were not passing and feminine toilettes going forward, in various stages, in space made scanty by extra beds spread upon the floor; and Miss Nancy, as she entered the Blue Room, had to make her little formal curtsy to a group of six. On the one hand, there were ladies no less important than the two Miss Gunns, the wine merchant's daughters from Lytherly, dressed in the height of fashion, with the tightest skirts and the shortest waists, and gazed at by Miss Ladbroke (of the Old Pastures) with a shyness not unsustained by inward criticism. Partly, Miss Ladbroke felt that her own skirt must be regarded as unduly lax by the Miss Gunns, and partly, that it was a pity the Miss Gunns did not show that judgement which she herself would show if she were in their place, by stopping a little on this side of the fashion. On the other hand, Mrs. Ladbroke was standing in skullcap and front, with her turban in her hand, curtsying and smiling blandly, and saying 'After you, ma'am' to another lady in similar circumstances, who had politely offered the precedence at the looking-glass.

But Miss Nancy had no sooner made her curtsy than an elderly lady came forward, whose full white muslin kerchief, and mob-cap round her curls of smooth grey hair, were in daring contrast with the puffed yellow satins and top-knotted caps of her neighbours. She approached Miss Nancy with much primness, and said, with a slow, treble suavity—

“Niece, I hope I see you well in health.” Miss Nancy kissed her aunt’s cheek dutifully, and answered, with the same sort of amiable primness, ‘Quite well, I thank you, aunt, and I hope I see you the same.’

‘Thank you, niece, I keep my health for the present. And how is my brother-in-law?’

These dutiful questions and answers were continued until it was ascertained in detail that the Lammeters were all as well as usual, and the Osgoods likewise, also that niece Priscilla must certainly arrive shortly, and that travelling on pillions in snowy weather was unpleasant, though a joeseph was a great protection. Then Nancy was formally introduced to her aunt’s visitors, the Miss Gunns, as being the daughters of a mother known to *their* mother, though now for the first time induced to make a journey into these parts; and these ladies were so taken by surprise at finding such a lovely face and figure in an out-of-the-way country place, that they began to feel some curiosity about the dress she would put on when she took off her joeseph. Miss Nancy, whose thoughts were always conducted with the propriety and moderation conspicuous in her manners, remarked to herself that the Miss Gunns wererather hard-featured than otherwise, and that such very low dresses as they wore might have been attributed to vanity if their shoulders had been pretty, but that, being as they were, it was not reasonable to suppose that they showed their necks from a love of display, but rather from some obligation not inconsistent with sense and modesty. She felt convinced, as she opened her box, that this must be her aunt Osgood’s opinion, for Miss Nancy’s mind resembled her aunt’s to a degree that everybody said was surprising, considering the

kinship was on Mr. Osgood's side ; and though you might not have supposed it from the formality of their greeting, there was a devoted attachment and mutual admiration between aunt and niece. Even Miss Nancy's refusal of her cousin Gilbert Osgood (on the ground solely that he was her cousin), though it had grieved her aunt greatly, had not in the least cooled the preference which had determined her to leave Nancy several of her hereditary ornaments, let Gilbert's future wife be whom she might. *the little*

Three of the ladies quickly retired, but the Miss Gunns were quite content that Mrs. Osgood's inclination to remain with her niece gave them also a reason for staying to see the rustic beauty's toilette. And it was really a pleasure—from the first opening of the band-box, where everything smelt of lavender and rose-leaves, to the clasping of the small coral necklace that fitted closely round her little white neck. Everything belonging to Miss Nancy was of delicate purity and natliness : not a crease was where it had no business to be, not a bit of her linen professed whiteness without fulfilling its profession ; the very pins on her pincushion were stuck in after a pattern from which she was careful to allow no aberration ; and as for her own person, it gave the same idea of perfect unvarying neatness as the body of a little bird. It is true that her light-brown hair was cropped behind like a boy's, and was dressed in front in a number of flat rings, that lay quite away from her face ; but there was no sort of coiffure that could make Miss Nancy's cheek and neck look otherwise than pretty ; and when at last she stood complete in her silvery twilled silk, her lace tucker, her coral necklace, and coral ear-drops, the Miss Gunns could see nothing to criticise except her hands, which bore the traces of butter-making, cheese-crushing, and even still coarser work. But Miss Nancy was not ashamed of that, for even while she was dressing she narrated to her aunt how she and Priscilla had packed their boxes yesterday, because this morning was baking morning, and since they were leaving home, it was desirable to make a good

supply of meat pies for the kitchen ; and as she concluded this judicious remark, she turned to the Miss Gunns that she might not commit the rudeness of including them in the conversation. The Miss Gunns smiled stiffly, and thought what a pity it was that these rich country people, who could afford to buy such good clothes (really Miss Nancy's lace and silk were very costly), should be brought up in utter ignorance and vulgarity. She actually said 'mate' for 'meat,' 'appen' for 'perhaps,' and 'oss' for 'horse,' which, to young ladies living in good Lytherly society, who habitually said 'orse, even in domestic privacy and only said 'appen on the right occasions, was necessarily shocking. Miss Nancy, indeed, had never been to any school higher than Dame Tedman's : her acquaintance with profane literature hardly went beyond the rhymes she had worked in her large sampler under the lamb and the shepherdess ; and in order to balance an account, she was obliged to effect her subtraction by removing visible metallic shillings and sixpences from a visible metallic total. There is hardly a servant-maid in these days who is not better informed than Miss Nancy ; yet she had the essential attributes of a lady—high veracity, delicate honour in her dealings, deference to others, and refined personal habits,—and lest these should not suffice to convince grammatical fair ones that her feelings can at all resemble theirs, I will add that she was slightly proud and exacting, and as constant in her affection towards a baseless opinion as towards an erring lover.

The anxiety about sister Priscilla, which had grown rather active by the time the coral necklace was clasped, was happily ended by the entrance of that cheerful-looking lady herself, with a face made blowsy by cold and damp. After the first questions and greetings, she turned to Nancy, and surveyed her from head to foot—then wheeled her round, to ascertain that the back view was equally faultless.

'What do you think o' these gowns, aunt Osgood ?' said Priscilla, while Nancy helped her to unrobe.

'Very handsome indeed, niece,' said Mrs. Osgood, with a slight increase of formality. She always thought niece Priscilla too rough.

'I'm obliged to have the same as Nancy, you know, for all I'm five years older and it makes me look yallow; for she never will have anything without I have mine just like it, because she wants us to look like sisters. And I tell her folks 'ull think it's my weakness makes me fancy as I shall look pretty in what she looks pretty in. For I *am* ugly—there's no denying that: I feature my father's family. But, law! I don't mind, do you?' Priscilla here turned to the Miss Gunns, rattling on in too much preoccupation with the delight of talking, to notice that her candour was not appreciated. 'The pretty uns do for fly-catchers—they keep the men off us. I've no opinion o' the men, Miss Gunn—I don't know what *you* have. And as for fretting and stewing about what *they*'ll think of you from morning till night, and making your life uneasy about what they're doing when they're out o' your sight—as I tell Nancy, it's a folly no woman need be guilty of, if she's got a good father and a good home: let her leave it to them as have got no fortin, and can't help themselves. As I say, Mr. Have-your-own-way is the best husband, and the only one I'd ever promise to obey. I know it isn't pleasant, when you've been used to living in a big way, and managing hogsheads and all that, to go and put your nose in by somebody else's fireside, or to sit down by yourself to a scrag or a knuckle; but, thank God! my father's a sober man and likely to live; and if you've got a man by the chimney-corner, it doesn't matter if he's childish—the business needn't be broke up.'

The delicate process of getting her narrow gown over her head without injury to her smooth curls, obliged Miss Priscilla to pause in this rapid survey of life, and Mrs. Osgood seized the opportunity of rising and saying—

'Well, niece, you'll follow us. The Miss Gunns will like to go down.'

'Sister,' said Nancy, when they were alone, 'you've offended the Miss Gunns, I'm sure.'

'What have I done, child?' said Priscilla, in some alarm.

'Why, you asked them if they minded about being ugly—you're so very blunt.'

'Law, did I? Well, it popped out: it's a mercy! I said no more, for I'm a bad un to live with folks when they don't like the truth. But as for being ugly, look at me, child, in this silver-coloured silk—I told you how it 'ud be—I look as yellow as a daffadil. Anybody 'ud say you wanted to make a maykin of me.'

'No, Priscy, don't say so. I begged and prayed of you not to let us have this silk if you'd like another better. I was willing to have *your* choice, you know I was,' said Nancy, in anxious self-vindication.

'Nonsense, child, you know you'd set your heart on this; and reason good, for you're the colour o' cream. It 'ud be fine doings for you to dress yourself to suit *my* skin. What I find fault with, is that notion o' yours as I must dress myself just like you. But you do as you like with me—you always did, from when first you begun to walk. If you wanted to go the field's length, the field's length you'd go; and there was no whipping you, for you looked as prim and innicent as a daisy all the while.'

'Priscy,' said Nancy, gently, as she fastened a coral necklace, exactly like her own, round Priscilla's neck, which was very far from being like her own, 'I'm sure I'm willing to give way as far as is right, but who shouldn't dress alike if it isn't sisters? Would you have us go about looking as if we were no kin to one another—us that have got no mother and not another sister in the world? I'd do what was right, if I dressed in a gown dyed with cheese-colouring; and I'd rather you'd choose, and let me wear what pleases you.'

'There you go again! You'd come round to the same thing if one talked to you from Saturday night till Saturday morning. It'll be fine fun to see how you'll master your husband and never raise your voice above the singing o' the kettle all the while. I like to see the men mastered!'

'Don't talk so, Prisey,' said Nancy, blushing. 'You know I don't mean ever to be married.'

'Oh, you never mean a fiddlestick's end!' said Priscilla, as she arranged her discarded dress, and closed her bandbox. 'Who shall I have to work for when father's gone, if you are to go and take notions in your head and be an old maid, because some folks are no better than they should be? I haven't a bit o' patience with you—sitting on an addled egg for ever, as if there was never a fresh un in the world. One old maid's enough out o' two sisters; and I shall do credit to a single life, for God A'mighty meant me for it. Come, we can go down now. I'm as ready as a mawkin can be—there's nothing awanting to frighten the crows, now I've got my ear-droppers in.'

As the two Miss Lammeters walked into the large parlour together, any one who did not know the character of both, might certainly have supposed that the reason why the square-shouldered, clumsy, high-featured Priscilla wore a dress the facsimile of her pretty sister's, was either the mistaken vanity of the one, or the malicious contrivance of the other in order to set off her own rare beauty. But the good-natured self-forgetful cheeriness and common-sense of Priscilla would soon have dissipated the one suspicion; and the modest calm of Nancy's speech and manners told clearly of a mind free from all disavowed devices.

Places of honour had been kept for the Miss Lammeters near the head of the principal tea-table in the wainscoted parlour, now looking fresh and pleasant with handsome branches of holly, yew, and laurel, from the abundant growths of the old-garden; and Nancy felt an inward flutter, that no firmness of purpose could prevent, when she saw Mr. Godfrey Cass advancing to lead her to a seat between himself and Mr. Crackenthorp, while Priscilla was called to the opposite side between her father and the Squire. It certainly did make some difference to Nancy that the lover she had given up was the young man of quite the highest consequence in the parish—at home in a venerable and unique



parlour, which was the extremity of grandeur in her experience, a parlour where *she* might one day have been mistress, with the consciousness that she was spoken of as 'Madam Cass,' the Squire's wife. These circumstances exalted her inward drama in her own eyes, and deepened the emphasis with which she declared to herself that not the most dazzling rank should induce her to marry a man whose conduct showed him careless of his character, but that, 'love once, love always,' was the motto of a true and pure woman, and no man should ever have any right over her which would be a call on her to destroy the dried flowers that she treasured, and always would treasure, for Godfrey Cass's sake. And Nancy was capable of keeping her word to herself under very trying conditions. Nothing but a becoming blush betrayed the moving thoughts that urged themselves upon her as she accepted the seat next to Mr. Crackenthorp; for she was so instinctively neat and adroit in all her actions, and her pretty lips met each other with such quiet firmness, that it would have been difficult for her to appear agitated.

It was not the rector's practice to let a charming blush pass without an appropriate compliment. He was not in the least lofty or aristocratic, but simply a merry-eyed, small-featured, grey-haired man, with his chin propped by an ample, many-creased white neckcloth, which seemed to predominate over every other point in his person, and somehow to impress its peculiar character on his remarks; so that to have considered his amenities apart from his cravat, would have been a severe, and perhaps a dangerous, effort of abstraction.

'Ha, Miss Nancy,' he said, turning his head within his cravat, and smiling down pleasantly upon her. 'when anybody pretends this has been a severe winter, I shall tell them I saw the roses blooming on New Year's Eve—eh, Godfrey, what do *you* say?'

Godfrey made no reply, and avoided looking at Nancy very markedly; for though these compli-

mentary personalities were held to be in excellent taste in old-fashioned Raveloe society, reverent love has a politeness of its own which it teaches to men otherwise of small schooling. But the Squire was rather impatient at Godfrey's showing himself a dull spark in this way. By this advanced hour of the day, the Squire was always in higher spirits than we have seen him in at the breakfast-table, and felt it quite pleasant to fulfil the hereditary duty of being noisily-jovial and patronising: the large silver snuff-box was in active service, and was offered without fail to all neighbours from time to time, however often they might have declined the favour. At present, the Squire had only given an express welcome to the heads of families as they appeared; but always as the evening deepened, his hospitality rayed out more widely, till he had tapped the youngest guests on the back and shown a peculiar fondness for their presence, in the full belief that they must feel their lives made happy by their belonging to a parish where there was such a hearty man as Squire Cass to invite them and wish them well. Even in this early stage of the jovial mood, it was natural that he should wish to supply his son's deficiencies by looking and speaking for him.

'Aye, aye,' he began, offering his snuff-box to Mr. Lameter, who for the second time bowed his head and waved his hand in stiff rejection of the offer, 'us old fellows may wish ourselves young to-night, when we see the mistletoe-bough in the White Parlour. It's true, most things are gone back'ard in these last thirty years—the country's going down since the old king fell ill. But when I look at Miss Nancy here, I begin to think the lasses keep up their quality;—ding me if I remember a sample to match her, not when I was a fine young fellow, and thought a deal about my pigtail. No offence to you, madam,' he added, bending to Mrs. Crackenthorp, who sat by him, 'I didn't know *you* when you were as young as Miss Nancy here.'

Mrs. Crackenthorp—a small blinking woman, who fidgeted incessantly with her lace, ribbons, and gold

chain, turning her head about and making subdued noises, very much like a guinea-pig, that twitches its nose and soliloquises in all company indiscriminately—now blinked and fidgeted towards the Squire, and said, ‘Oh, no—no offence.’

This emphatic compliment of the Squire’s to Nancy was felt by others besides Godfrey to have a diplomatic significance; and her father gave a slight additional erectness to his back, as he looked across the table at her with complacent gravity. That grave and orderly senior was not going to bate a jot of his dignity by seeming elated at the notion of a match between his family and the Squire’s: he was gratified by any honour paid to his daughter; but he must see an alteration in several ways before his consent would be vouchsafed. His spare but healthy person, and high-featured firm face, that looked as if it had never been flushed by excess, was in strong contrast, not only with the Squire’s, but with the appearance of the Raveloe farmers generally—in accordance with a favourite saying of his own that ‘breed was stronger than pasture.’

‘Miss Nancy’s wonderful like what her mother was, though; isn’t she, Kimble?’ said the stout lady of that name, looking round for her husband.

But Doctor Kimble (county apothecaries in old days enjoyed that title without authority of diploma), being a thin and agile man, was flitting about the room with his hands in his pockets, making himself agreeable to his feminine patients, with medical impartiality, and being welcomed everywhere as a doctor by hereditary right—not one of those miserable apothecaries who canvass for practice in strange neighbourhoods, and spend all their income in starving their one horse, but a man of substance, able to keep an extravagant table like the best of his patients. Time out of mind the Raveloe doctor had been a Kimble; Kimble was inherently a doctor’s name; and it was difficult to contemplate firmly the melancholy fact that the actual Kimble had no son, so that his practice might one day be handed over to a successor, with the incongruous

name of Taylor or Johnson. But in that case the wiser people in Raveloe would employ Dr. Blick of Flitton—as less unnatural.

‘Did you speak to me, my dear?’ said the authentic doctor, coming quickly to his wife’s side; but, as if foreseeing that she would be too much out of breath to repeat her remark, he went on immediately—‘Ha, Miss Priscilla, the sight of you revives the taste of that super-excellent pork-pie. I hope the batch isn’t near an end.’

‘Yes, indeed, it is, doctor,’ said Priscilla; ‘but I’ll answer for it the next shall be as good. My pork-pies don’t turn out well by chance.’

‘Not as your doctoring does, eh, Kimble?—because folks forget to take your physic, eh?’ said the Squire, who regarded physic and doctors as many loyal churchmen regard the church and the clergy—tasting a joke against them when he was in health, but impatiently eager for their aid when anything was the matter with him. He tapped his box, and looked round with a triumphant laugh.

‘Ah, she has a quick wit, my friend Priscilla has,’ said the doctor, choosing to attribute the epigram to the lady rather than allow a brother-in-law that advantage over him. ‘She saves a little pepper to sprinkle over her talk—that’s the reason why she never puts too much into her pies. There’s my wife, now, she never has an answer at her tongue’s end; but if I offend her, she’s sure to scarify my throat with black pepper the next day, or else give me the colic with watery greens. That’s an awful tit-for-tat.’ Here the vivacious doctor made a pathetic grimace.

‘Did you ever hear the like?’ said Mrs. Kimble, laughing above her double chin with much good-humour, aside to Mrs. Crackenthorp, who blinked and nodded, and seemed to intend a smile, which, by the correlation of forces, went off in small twitchings and noises.

‘I suppose that’s the sort of tit-for-tat adopted in your profession, Kimble, if you’ve a grudge against a patient,’ said the rector.

'Never do have a grudge against our patients,' said Mr. Kimble, 'except when they leave us: and then, you see, we haven't the chance of prescribing for 'em. Ha, Miss Nancy,' he continued, suddenly skipping to Nancy's side, 'you won't forget your promise? You're to save a dance for me, you know.'

'Come, come, Kimble, don't you be too for'ard,' said the Squire. 'Give the young uns fair-play. There's my son Godfrey'll be wanting to have a round with you if you run off with Miss Nancy. He's bespoke her for the first dance, I'll be bound. Eh, sir! what do you say?' he continued, throwing himself backward, and looking at Godfrey. 'Haven't you asked Miss Nancy to open the dance with you?'

Godfrey, sorely uncomfortable under this significant insistance about Nancy, and afraid to think where it would end by the time his father had set his usual hospitable example of drinking before and after supper, saw no course open but to turn to Nancy and say, with as little awkwardness as possible—

'No; I've not asked her yet, but I hope she'll consent—if somebody else hasn't been before me.'

'No, I've not engaged myself,' said Nancy, quietly, though blushing. (If Mr. Godfrey founded any hopes on her consenting to dance with him, he would soon be undeceived; but there was no need for her to be uncivil.)

'Then I hope you've no objections to dancing with me,' said Godfrey, beginning to lose the sense that there was anything uncomfortable in this arrangement.

'No, no objections,' said Nancy, in a cold tone.

'Ah, well, you're a lucky fellow, Godfrey,' said uncle Kimble; 'but you're my godson, so I won't stand in your way. Else I'm not so very old, eh, my dear?' he went on, skipping to his wife's side again. 'You wouldn't mind my having a second after you were gone—not if I cried a good deal first?'

'Come, come, take a cup o' tea and stop your tongue, do,' said good-humoured Mrs. Kimble, feeling some pride in a husband who must be regarded as so clever

and amusing by the company generally. If he had only not been irritable at cards !

While safe, well-tested personalities were enlivening the tea in this way, the sound of the fiddle approaching within a distance at which it could be heard distinctly, made the young people look at each other with sympathetic impatience for the end of the meal.

'Why, there 's Solomon in the hall,' said the Squire, "and playing my fav'rite tune, I believe—"The flaxen-headed ploughboy"—he's for giving us a hint as we aren't enough in a hurry to hear him play. Bob,' he called out to his third long-legged son, who was at the other end of the room, 'open the door, and tell Solomon to come in. He shall give us a tune here.'

Bob obeyed, and Solomon walked in, fiddling as he walked, for he would on no account break off in the middle of a tune.

'Here, Solomon,' said the Squire, with loud patronage. 'Round here, my man. Ah, I knew it was "The flaxen-headed ploughboy": there's no finer tune.'

Solomon Macey, a small hale old man with an abundant crop of long white hair reaching nearly to his shoulders, advanced to the indicated spot, bowing reverently while he fiddled, as much as to say that he respected the company, though he respected the keynote more. As soon as he had repeated the tune and lowered his fiddle, he bowed again to the Squire and the rector, and said, 'I hope I see your honour and your reverence well, and wishing you health and long life and a happy New Year. And wishing the same to you, Mr. Lammeter, sir; and to the other gentlemen, and the madams, and the young lasses.'

As Solomon uttered the last words, he bowed in all directions solicitously, lest he should be wanting in due respect. But thereupon he immediately began to prelude, and fell into the tune which he knew would be taken as a special compliment by Mr. Lammeter.

'Thank ye, Solomon, thank ye,' said Mr. Lammeter, when the fiddle paused again. 'That's "Over the hills and far away," that is. My father used to say to me,

whenever we heard that tune, "Ah, lad, I come from over the hills and far away." There's a many tunes I don't make head or tail of; but that speaks to me like the blackbird's whistle. I suppose it's the name: there's a deal in the name of a tune.'

But Solomon was already impatient to prelude again, and presently broke with much spirit into 'Sir Roger de Coverley,' at which there was a sound of chairs pushed back, and laughing voices.

'Aye, aye, Solomon, we know what that means,' said the Squire, rising. 'It's time to begin the dance, eh? Lead the way, then, and we'll all follow you.'

So Solomon, holding his white head on one side, and playing vigorously, marched forward at the head of the gay procession into the White Parlour, where the mistletoe-bough was hung, and multitudinous tallow candles made rather a brilliant effect, gleaming from among the berried holly-boughs, and reflected in the old-fashioned oval mirrors fastened in the panels of the white wainscot. A quaint procession! Old Solomon, in his seedy clothes and long white locks, seemed to be luring that decent company by the magic scream of his fiddle—luring discreet matrons in turban-shaped caps, nay, Mrs. Crackenthorp herself, the summit of whose perpendicular feather was on a level with the Squire's shoulder—luring fair lasses complacently conscious of very short waists and skirts blameless of front-folds—burly fathers, in large variegated waistcoats, and ruddy sons, for the most part shy and sheepish, in short nether garments and very long coat-tails.

Already, Mr. Macey and a few other privileged villagers, who were allowed to be spectators on these great occasions, were seated on benches placed for them near the door; and great was the admiration and satisfaction in that quarter when the couples had formed themselves for the dance, and the Squire led off with Mrs. Crackenthorp, joining hands with the rector and Mrs. Osgood. That was as it should be—that was what everybody had been used to—and the charter of Raveloe seemed to be renewed by the ceremony. It was not thought

of as an unbecoming levity for the old and middle-aged people to dance a little before sitting down to cards, but rather as part of their social duties. For what were these if not to be merry at appropriate times, interchanging visits and poultry with due frequency, paying each other old-established compliments in sound traditional phrases, passing well-tryed personal jokes, urging your guests to eat and drink too much out of hospitality, and eating and drinking too much in your neighbour's house to show that you liked your cheer? And the parson naturally set an example in these social duties. For it would not have been possible for the Raveloe mind, without a peculiar revelation, to know that a clergyman should be a pale-faced memento of solemnities, instead of a reasonably faulty man, whose exclusive authority to read prayers and preach, to christen, marry, and bury you, necessarily co-existed with the right to sell you the ground to be buried in, and to take tithe in kind; on which last point, of course, there was a little grumbling, but not to the extent of irreligion—not beyond the grumbling at the rain, which was by no means accompanied with a spirit of impious defiance, but with a desire that the prayer for fine weather might be read forthwith.

There was no reason, then, why the rector's dancing should not be received as part of the fitness of things quite as much as the Squire's, or why, on the other hand, Mr. Macey's official respect should restrain him from subjecting the parson's performance to that criticism with which minds of extraordinary acuteness must necessarily contemplate the doings of their fallible fellow-men.

'The Squire's pretty springe, considering his weight,' said Mr. Macey, 'and he stamps uncommon well. But Mr. Lammeter beats 'em all for shapes: you see, he holds his head like a sodger, and he isn't so cushiony as most o' the oldish gentlefolks—they run fat in general; and he's got a fine leg. The parson's nimble enough, but he hasn't got much of a leg: it's a bit too thick down'ard, and his knees might be a bit nearer w'out damage; but he might do worse, he might do worse.'



Priscilla could come to her ; for the sisters had already exchanged a short whisper and an open-eyed glance full of meaning. No reason less urgent than this could have prevailed on Nancy to give Godfrey this opportunity of sitting apart with her. As for Godfrey, he was feeling so happy and oblivious under the long charm of the country-dance with Nancy, that he got rather bold on the strength of her confusion, and was capable of leading her straight away, without leave asked, into the adjoining small parlour, where the card-tables were set.

‘O no, thank you,’ said Nancy, coldly, as soon as she perceived where he was going, ‘not in there. I’ll wait here till Priscilla’s ready to come to me. I’m sorry to bring you out of the dance and make myself troublesome.’

‘Why, you’ll be more comfortable here by yourself,’ said the artful Godfrey; ‘I’ll leave you here till your sister can come.’ He spoke in an indifferent tone.

That was an agreeable proposition, and just what Nancy desired ; why, then, was she a little hurt that Mr. Godfrey should make it ? They entered, and she seated herself on a chair against one of the card-tables. as the stiffest and most unapproachable position she could choose.

‘Thank you, sir,’ she said immediately. ‘I needn’t give you any more trouble. I’m sorry you’ve had such an unlucky partner.’

‘That’s very ill-natured of you,’ said Godfrey, standing by her without any sign of intended departure, ‘to be sorry you’ve danced with me.’

‘Oh, no, sir, I don’t mean to say what’s ill-natured at all,’ said Nancy, looking distractingly prim and pretty. ‘When gentlemen have so many pleasures, one dance can make but very little.’

‘You know that isn’t true. You know one dance with you matters more to me than all the other pleasures in the world.’

It was a long, long while since Godfrey had said anything so direct as that, and Nancy was startled. But

her instinctive dignity and repugnance to any show of emotion made her sit perfectly still, and only throw a little more decision into her voice as she said—

‘No, indeed, Mr. Godfrey, that’s not known to me, and I have very good reasons for thinking different. But if it’s true, I don’t wish to hear it.’

‘Would you never forgive me, then, Nancy—never think well of me, let what would happen—would you never think the present made amends for the past? Not if I turned a good fellow, and gave up everything you didn’t like?’

Godfrey was half conscious that this sudden opportunity of speaking to Nancy alone had driven him beside himself; but blind feeling had got the mastery of his tongue. Nancy really felt much agitated by the possibility Godfrey’s words suggested, but this very pressure of emotion that she was in danger of finding too strong for her, roused all her power of self-command.

‘I should be glad to see a good change in anybody, Mr. Godfrey,’ she answered, with the slightest discernable difference of tone, ‘but it’d be better if no change was wanted.’

‘You’re very hard-hearted, Nancy,’ said Godfrey, pettishly. ‘You might encourage me to be a better fellow. I’m very miserable—but you’ve no feeling.’

‘I think those have the least feeling that act wrong to begin with,’ said Nancy, sending out a flash in spite of herself. Godfrey was delighted with that little flash, and would have liked to go on and make her quarrel with him; Nancy was so exasperatingly quiet and firm. She was not indifferent to him *yet*, though—

The entrance of Priscilla, bustling forward and saying, ‘Dear heart alive, child, let us look at this gown,’ cut off Godfrey’s hopes of a quarrel.

‘I suppose I must go now,’ he said to Priscilla.

‘It’s no matter to me whether you go or stay,’ said that frank lady, searching for something in her pocket, with a preoccupied brow.

‘Do *you* want me to go?’ said Godfrey, looking at Nancy, who was now standing up by Priscilla’s order.

'As you like,' said Nancy, trying to recover all her former coldness, and looking down carefully at the hem of her gown.

'Then I like to stay,' said Godfrey, with a reckless determination to get as much of this joy as he could to-night, and think nothing of the morrow.

## CHAPTER XII.

WHILE Godfrey Cass was taking draughts of forgetfulness from the sweet presence of Nancy, willingly losing all sense of that hidden bond which at other moments galled and fretted him so as to mingle irritation with the very sunshine, Godfrey's wife was walking with slow uncertain steps through the snow-covered Raveloe lanes, carrying her child in her arms.

This journey on New Year's Eve was a premeditated act of vengeance which she had kept in her heart ever since Godfrey, in a fit of passion, had told her he would sooner die than acknowledge her as his wife. There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year's Eve, she knew: her husband would be smiling and smiled upon, hiding *her* existence in the darkest corner of his heart. But she would mar his pleasure: she would go in her dingy rags, with her faded face, once as handsome as the best, with her little child that had its father's hair and eyes, and disclose herself to the Squire as his eldest son's wife. It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable. Molly knew that the cause of her dingy rags was not her husband's neglect, but the demon Opium to whom she was enslaved, body and soul, except in the lingering mother's tenderness that refused to give him her hungry child. She knew this well; and yet, in the moments of wretched unbenumbed consciousness, the sense of her want and degradation transformed itself continually into bitterness towards Godfrey. *He* was well off; and if she

had her rights she would be well off too. The belief that he repented his marriage, and suffered from it, only aggravated her vindictiveness. Just and self-reproving thoughts do not come to us too thickly, even in the purest air, and with the best lessons of heaven and earth; how should those white-winged delicate messengers make their way to Molly's poisoned chamber, inhabited by no higher memories than those of a bar-maid's paradise of pink ribbons and gentlemen's jokes?

She had set out at an early hour, but had lingered on the road, inclined by her indolence to believe that if she waited under a warm shed the snow would cease to fall. She had waited longer than she knew, and now that she found herself belated in the snow-hidden ruggedness of the long lanes, even the animation of a vindictive purpose could not keep her spirit from failing. It was seven o'clock, and by this time she was not very far from Raveloe, but she was not familiar enough with those monotonous lanes to know how near she was to her journey's end. She needed comfort, and she knew but one comforter—the familiar demon in her bosom; but she hesitated a moment, after drawing out the black remnant, before she raised it to her lips. In that moment the mother's love pleaded for painful consciousness rather than oblivion—pleaded to be left in aching weariness, rather than to have the encircling arms benumbed so that they could not feel the dear burden. In another moment Molly had flung something away, but it was not the black remnant—it was an empty phial. And she walked on again under the breaking cloud, from which there came now and then the light of a quickly-veiled star, for a freezing wind had sprung up since the snowing had ceased. But she walked always more and more drowsily, and clutched more and more automatically the sleeping child at her bosom.

Slowly the demon was working his will, and cold and weariness were his helpers. Soon she felt nothing but a supreme immediate longing that curtailed off all futurity—the longing to lie down and sleep. She had

arrived at a spot where her footsteps were no longer checked by a hedgerow, and she had wandered vaguely, unable to distinguish any objects, notwithstanding the wide whiteness around her, and the growing starlight. She sank down against a straggling furze bush, an easy pillow enough; and the bed of snow, too, was soft. She did not feel that the bed was cold, and did not heed whether the child would wake and cry for her. But her arms did not yet relax their instinctive clutch; and the little one slumbered on as gently as if it had been rocked in a lace-trimmed cradle.

But the complete torpor came at last: the fingers lost their tension, the arms unbent; then the little head fell away from the bosom, and the blue eyes opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little peevish cry of 'mammy,' and an effort to regain the pillowing arm and bosom; but mammy's ear was deaf, and the pillow seemed to be slipping away backward. Suddenly, as the child rolled downward on its mother's knees, all wet with snow, its eyes were caught by a bright glancing light on the white ground, and, with the ready transition of infancy, it was immediately absorbed in watching the bright living thing running towards it, yet never arriving. That bright living thing must be caught; and in an instant the child had slipped on all-fours, and held out one little hand to catch the gleam. But the gleam would not be caught in that way, and now the head was held up to see where the cunning gleam came from. It came from a very bright place; and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, the old grimy shawl in which it was wrapped trailing behind it, and the queer little bonnet dangling at its back—toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, and right up to the warm hearth, where there was a bright fire of logs and sticks, which had thoroughly warmed the old sack (Silas's greatcoat) spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice from its mother, squatted down on the sack, and spread its tiny hands towards the blaze, in perfect

contentment, gurgling and making inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire, like a new-hatched gosling beginning to find itself comfortable. But presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids.

But where was Silas Marner while this stranger-visitor had come to his hearth? He was in the cottage, but he did not see the child. During the last few weeks, since he had lost his money, he had contracted the habit of opening his door, and looking out from time to time, as if he thought that his money might be somehow coming back to him, or that some trace, some news of it, might be mysteriously on the road, and be caught by the listening ear or the straining eye. It was chiefly at night, when he was not occupied in his loom, that he fell into this repetition of an act for which he could have assigned no definite purpose, and which can hardly be understood except by those who have undergone a bewildering separation from a supremely loved object. In the evening twilight, and later whenever the night was not dark, Silas looked out on that narrow prospect round the Stone-pits, listening and gazing, not with hope, but with mere yearning and unrest.

This morning he had been told by some of his neighbours that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out and the new rung in, because that was good luck, and might bring his money back again. This was only a friendly Raveloe-way of jesting with the half-crazy oddities of a miser, but it had perhaps helped to throw Silas into a more than usually excited state. Since the on-coming of twilight he had opened his door again and again, though only to shut it immediately at seeing all distance veiled by the falling snow. But the last time he opened it the snow had ceased, and the clouds were parting here and there. He stood and listened, and gazed for a long while—there was really something on the road coming towards him then, but he caught no sign of it; and the stillness and the wide trackless snow seemed to narrow

his solitude, and touched his yearning with the chill of despair. He went in again, and put his right hand on the latch of the door to close it—but he did not close it: he was arrested, as he had been already since his loss, by the invisible wand of catalepsy, and stood like a graven image, with wide but sightless eyes, holding open his door, powerless to resist either the good or evil that might enter there.

When Marner's sensibility returned, he continued the action which had been arrested, and closed his door, unaware of the chasm in his consciousness, unaware of any intermediate change, except that the light had grown dim, and that he was chilled and faint. He thought he had been too long standing at the door and looking out. Turning towards the hearth, where the two logs had fallen apart, and sent forth only a red uncertain glimmer, he seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold!—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child—a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream—his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. Was it a dream? He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throwing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision—it only lit up more distinctly the

little round form of the child and its shabby clothing. It was very much like his little sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. How and when had the child come in without his knowledge? He had never been beyond the door. But along with that question, and almost thrusting it away, there was a vision of the old home and the old streets leading to Lantern Yard—and within that vision another, of the thoughts which had been present with him in those far-off scenes. The thoughts were strange to him now, like old friendships impossible to revive; and yet he had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message come to him from that far-off life: it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe—old quiverings of tenderness—old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life; for his imagination had not yet extricated itself from the sense of mystery in the child's sudden presence, and had formed no conjectures of ordinary natural means by which the event could have been brought about.

But there was a cry on the hearth: the child had awaked, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and burst louder and louder into that mingling of inarticulate cries with 'mammy' by which little children express the bewilderment of waking. Silas pressed it to him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he bethought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool by the dying fire, would do to feed the child with if it were only warmed up a little.

He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar from an old store which he had refrained from using for himself, stopped the cries of the little one, and made her lift her blue eyes with a wide quiet gaze at Silas, as he put the spoon into her mouth. Presently she slipped from his knee and began to toddle about, but with a pretty stagger that made Silas jump up and follow her lest she should fall against anything that would hurt her. But



she only fell in a sitting posture on the ground, and began to pull at her boots, looking up at him with a crying face as if the boots hurt her. He took her on his knee again, but it was some time before it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the wet boots were the grievance, pressing on her warm ankles. He got them off with difficulty, and baby was at once happily occupied with the primary mystery of her own toes, inviting Silas, with much chuckling, to consider the mystery too. But the wet boots had at last suggested to Silas that the child had been walking on the snow, and this roused him from his entire oblivion of any ordinary means by which it could have entered or been brought into his house. Under the prompting of this new idea, and without waiting to form conjectures, he raised the child in his arms, and went to the door. As soon as he had opened it, there was the cry of 'mammy' again, which Silas had not heard since the child's first hungry waking. Bending forward, he could just discern the marks made by the little feet on the virgin snow, and he followed their track to the furze bushes. 'Mammy!' the little one cried again and again, stretching itself forward so as almost to escape from Silas's arms, before he himself was aware that there was something more than the bush before him—that there was a human body, with the head sunk low in the furze, and half-covered with the shaken snow.

### CHAPTER XIII.

It was after the early supper-time at the Red House, and the entertainment was in that stage when bashfulness itself had passed into easy jollity, when gentlemen, conscious of unusual accomplishments, could at length be prevailed on to dance a hornpipe, and when the Squire preferred talking loudly, scattering snuff, and patting his visitors' backs, to sitting longer at the whist-table—a choice exasperating to uncle Kimble, who, being always volatile in sober business hours,

became intense and bitter over cards and brandy, shuffled before his adversary's deal with a glare of suspicion, and turned up a mean trump-card with an air of inexpressible disgust, as if in a world where such things could happen one might as well enter on a course of reckless profligacy. When the evening had advanced to this pitch of freedom and enjoyment, it was usual for the servants, the heavy duties of supper being well over, to get their share of amusement by coming to look on at the dancing ; so that the back regions of the house were left in solitude.

There were two doors by which the White Parlour was entered from the hall, and they were both standing open for the sake of air ; but the lower one was crowded with the servants and villagers, and only the upper doorway was left free. Bob Cass was figuring in a hornpipe, and his father, very proud of this lithe son, whom he repeatedly declared to be just like himself in his young days, in a tone that implied this to be the very highest stamp of juvenile merit, was the centre of a group who had placed themselves opposite the performer, not far from the upper door. Godfrey was standing a little way off, not to admire his brother's dancing, but to keep sight of Nancy, who was seated in the group, near her father. He stood aloof, because he wished to avoid suggesting himself as a subject for the Squire's fatherly jokes in connection with matrimony and Miss Nancy Lammeter's beauty, which were likely to become more and more explicit. But he had the prospect of dancing with her again when the hornpipe was concluded, and in the meantime it was very pleasant to get long glances at her quite unobserved.

But when Godfrey was lifting his eyes from one of those long glances, they encountered an object as startling to him at that moment as if it had been an apparition from the dead. It *was* an apparition from that hidden life which lies, like a dark by-street, behind the goodly ornamented façade that meets the sunlight and the gaze of respectable admirers. It was his own child, carried in Silas Marner's arms. That was his

the best woman to get. Ben was here himself before supper; is he gone?’

‘Yes, sir, I met him,’ said Marner; ‘but I couldn’t stop to tell him anything, only I said I was going for the doctor, and he said the doctor was at the Squire’s. And I made haste and ran, and there was nobody to be seen at the back o’ the house, and so I went in to where the company was.’

The child, no longer distracted by the bright light and the smiling women’s faces, began to cry and call for ‘mammy,’ though always clinging to Marner, who had apparently won her thorough confidence. Godfrey had come back with the boots, and felt the cry as if some fibre were drawn tight within him.

‘I’ll go,’ he said, hastily, eager for some movement; ‘I’ll go and fetch the woman—Mrs. Winthrop.’

‘Oh, pooh—send somebody else,’ said uncle Kimble, hurrying away with Marner.

‘You’ll let me know if I can be of any use, Kimble,’ said Mr. Crackenthorp. But the doctor was out of hearing.

Godfrey, too, had disappeared: he was gone to snatch his hat and coat, having just reflection enough to remember that he must not look like a madman; but he rushed out of the house into the snow without heeding his thin shoes.

In a few minutes he was on his rapid way to the Stone-pits by the side of Dolly, who, though feeling that she was entirely in her place in encountering cold and snow on an errand of mercy, was much concerned at a young gentleman’s getting his feet wet under a like impulse.

‘You’d a deal better go back, sir,’ said Dolly, with respectful compassion. ‘You’ve no call to catch cold; and I’d ask you if you’d be so good as tell my husband to come, on your way back—he’s at the Rainbow, I doubt—if you found him anyway sober enough to be o’ use. Or else, there’s Mrs. Snell ’ud happen send the boy up to fetch and carry, for there may be things wanted from the doctor’s.’

'No, I'll stay, now I'm once out—I'll stay outside here,' said Godfrey, when they came opposite Marner's cottage. 'You can come and tell me if I can do anything.'

'Well, sir, you're very good: you've a tender heart,' said Dolly, going to the door.

Godfrey was too painfully preoccupied to feel a twinge of self-reproach at this undeserved praise. He walked up and down, unconscious that he was plunging ankle-deep in snow, unconscious of everything but trembling suspense about what was going on in the cottage, and the effect of each alternative on his future lot. No, not quite unconscious of everything else. Deeper down, and half-smothered by passionate desire and dread, there was the sense that he ought not to be waiting on these alternatives; that he ought to accept the consequences of his deeds, own the miserable wife, and fulfil the claims of the helpless child. But he had not moral courage enough to contemplate that active renunciation of Nancy as possible for him: he had only conscience and heart enough to make him for ever uneasy under the weakness that forbade the renunciation. And at this moment his mind leaped away from all restraint toward the sudden prospect of deliverance from his long bondage.

'Is she dead?' said the voice that predominated over every other within him. 'If she is, I may marry Nancy; and then I shall be a good fellow in future, and have no secrets, and the child—shall be taken care of somehow.' But across that vision came the other possibility—'She may live, and then it's all up with me.'

Godfrey never knew how long it was before the door of the cottage opened and Mr. Kimble came out. He went forward to meet his uncle, prepared to suppress the agitation he must feel, whatever news he was to hear.

'I waited for you, as I'd come so far,' he said, speaking first.

'Pooh, it was nonsense for you to come out: why didn't you send one of the men? There's nothing to

be done. She's dead—has been dead for hours, I should say.'

'What sort of woman is she?' said Godfrey, feeling the blood rush to his face.

'A young woman, but emaciated, with long black hair. Some vagrant—quite in rags. She's got a wedding-ring on, however. They must fetch her away to the workhouse to-morrow. Come, come along.'

'I want to look at her,' said Godfrey. 'I think I saw such a woman yesterday. I'll overtake you in a minute or two.'

Mr. Kimble went on, and Godfrey turned back to the cottage. He cast only one glance at the dead face on the pillow, which Dolly had smoothed with decent care; but he remembered that last look at his unhappy hated wife so well, that at the end of sixteen years every line in the worn face was present to him when he told the full story of this night.

He turned immediately towards the hearth where Silas Marner sat lulling the child. She was perfectly quiet now, but not asleep—only soothed by sweet porridge and warmth into that wide gazing calm which makes us older human beings, with our inward turmoil, feel a certain awe in the presence of a little child, such as we feel before some quiet majesty or beauty in the earth or sky—before a steady-glowing planet, or a full-flowered eglantine, or the bending trees over a silent pathway. The wide-open blue eyes looked up at Godfrey's without any uneasiness or sign of recognition: the child could make no visible audible claim on its father; and the father felt a strange mixture of feelings, a conflict of regret and joy, that the pulse of that little heart had no response for the half jealous yearning in his own, when the blue eyes turned away from him slowly, and fixed themselves on the weaver's queer face, which was bent low down to look at them, while the small hand began to pull Marner's withered cheek with loving disfiguration.

'You'll take the child to the parish to-morrow?' asked Godfrey, speaking as indifferently as he could.

'Who says so?' said Marner, sharply. 'Will they make me take her?'

'Why, you wouldn't like to keep her, should you—an old bachelor like you?'

'Till anybody shows they've a right to take her away from me,' said Marner. 'The mother's dead, and I reckon it's got no father: it's a lone thing—and I'm a lone thing. My money's gone, I don't know where—and this is come from I don't know where. I know nothing—I'm partly mazed.'

'Poor little thing!' said Godfrey. 'Let me give something towards finding it clothes.'

He had put his hand in his pocket and found half-a-guinea, and, thrusting it into Silas's hand, he hurried out of the cottage to overtake Mr. Kimble.

'Ah, I see it's not the same woman I saw,' he said, as he came up. 'It's a pretty little child: the old fellow seems to want to keep it; that's strange for a miser like him. But I gave him a trifle to help him out: the parish isn't likely to quarrel with him for the right to keep the child.'

'No; but I've seen the time when I might have quarrelled with him for it myself. It's too late now, though. If the child ran into the fire, your aunt's too fat to overtake it: she could only sit and grunt like an alarmed sow. But what a fool you are, Godfrey, to come out in your dancing shoes and stockings in this way—and you one of the beaux of the evening, and at your own house! What do you mean by such freaks, young fellow? Has Miss Nancy been cruel, and do you want to spite her by spoiling your pumps?'

'Oh, everything has been disagreeable to-night. I was tired to death of jigging and gallanting, and that bother about the hornpipes. And I'd got to dance with the other Miss Gunn,' said Godfrey, glad of the subterfuge his uncle had suggested to him.

The prevarication and white lies which a mind that keeps itself ambitiously pure is as uneasy under as a great artist under the false touches that no eye detects but his own, are worn as lightly as mere trimmings when once the actions have become a lie.

Godfrey reappeared in the White Parlour with dry feet, and, since the truth must be told, with a sense of relief and gladness that was too strong for painful thoughts to struggle with. For could he not venture now, whenever opportunity offered, to say the tenderest things to Nancy Lammeter—to promise her and himself that he would always be just what she would desire to see him? There was no danger that his dead wife would be recognized: those were not days of active inquiry and wide report; and as for the registry of their marriage, that was a long way off, buried in unturned pages, away from every one's interest but his own. Dunsey might betray him if he came back; but Dunsey might be won to silence.

And when events turn out so much better for a man than he has had reason to dread, is it not a proof that his conduct has been less foolish and blameworthy than it might otherwise have appeared? When we are treated well, we naturally begin to think that we are not altogether unmeritorious, and that it is only just we should treat ourselves well, and not mar our own good fortune. Where, after all, would be the use of his confessing the past to Nancy Lammeter, and throwing away his happiness?—nay, hers? for he felt some confidence that she loved him. As for the child, he would see that it was cared for: he would never forsake it; he would do everything but own it. Perhaps it would be just as happy in life without being owned by its father, seeing that nobody could tell how things would turn out, and that—is there any other reason wanted?—well, then, that the father would be much happier without owning the child.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THERE was a pauper's burial that week in Raveloe, and up Kench Yard at Batherley it was known that the dark-haired woman with the fair child, who had lately come to lodge there, was gone away again. That

was all the <sup>of his life</sup> express-note taken that Molly had disappeared from the eyes of men. But the unwept death, which, to the general lot, seemed as trivial as the summer-shed leaf, was charged with the force of destiny to certain human lives that we know of, shaping their joys and sorrows even to the end.

Silas Marner's determination to keep the 'tramp's child' was matter of hardly less surprising and iterated talk in the village than the robbery of his money. That softening of feeling towards him which dated from his misfortune, that merging of suspicion and dislike in a rather contemptuous pity for him as lone and crazy, was now accompanied with a more active sympathy, especially amongst the women. Notable mothers, who knew what it was to keep children 'whole and sweet'; lazy mothers, who knew what it was to be interrupted in folding their arms and scratching their elbows by the mischievous propensities of children just firm on their legs, were equally interested in conjecturing how a lone man would manage with a two-year-old child on his hands, and were equally ready with their suggestions: the notable chiefly telling him what he had better do, and the lazy ones being emphatic in telling him what he would never be able to do.

Among the notable mothers, Dolly Winthrop was the one whose neighbourly offices were the most acceptable to Marner, for they were rendered without any show of bustling instruction. Silas had shown her the half-guinea given to him by Godfrey, and had asked her what he should do about getting some clothes for the child.

'Eh, Master Marner,' said Dolly, 'there's no call to buy, no more nor a pair o' shoes; for I've got the little petticoats as Aaron wore five years ago, and it's ill spending the money on them baby-clothes, for the child 'ull grow like grass i' May, bless it—that it will.'

And the same day Dolly brought her bundle, and displayed to Marner, one by one, the tiny garments in their due order of succession, most of them patched and darned, but clean and neat as fresh-sprung herbs. This



was the introduction to a great ceremony with soap and water, from which baby came out in new beauty, and sat on Dolly's knee, handling her toes and chuckling and patting her palms together with an air of having made several discoveries about herself, which she communicated by alternate sounds of 'gug-gug-gug,' and 'mammy.' The 'mammy' was not a cry of need or uneasiness: Baby had been used to utter it without expecting either sound or touch to follow.

'Anybody 'ud think the angils in heaven couldn't be prettier,' said Dolly, rubbing the golden curls and kissing them. 'And to think of its being covered wi' them dirty rags—and the poor mother—froze to death; but there's Them as took care of it, and brought it to your door, Master Marner. The door was open, and it walked in over the snow, like as if it had been a little starved robin. Didn't you say the door was open?'

'Yes,' said Silas, meditatively. 'Yes—the door was open. The money's gone I don't know where, and this is come from I don't know where.'

He had not mentioned to any one his unconsciousness of the child's entrance, shrinking from questions which might lead to the fact he himself suspected—namely, that he had been in one of his trances.

'Ah,' said Dolly, with soothing gravity, 'it's like the night and the morning, and the sleeping and the waking, and the rain and the harvest—one goes and the other comes, and we know nothing how nor where. We may strive and scrat and fend, but it's little we can do arter all—the big things come and go wi' no striving o' our'n—they do, that they do; and I think you're in the right on it to keep the little un, Master Marner, seeing as it's been sent to you, though there's folks as thinks different. You'll happen be a bit moithered with it while it's so little; but I'll come, and welcome, and see to it for you: I've a bit o' time to spare most days, for when one gets up betimes i' the morning, the clock seems to stan' still tow'rt ten, afore it's time to go about the victual. So, as I say, I'll come to see to the child for you, and welcome.'

‘Thank you . . . kindly,’ said Silas, hesitating a little, ‘I’ll be glad if you’ll tell me things. But,’ he added, uneasily, leaning forward to look at Baby with some jealousy, as she was resting her head backward against Dolly’s arm, and eyeing him contentedly from a distance—‘But I want to do things for it myself, else it may get fond o’ somebody else, and not fond o’ me. I’ve been used to fending for myself in the house—I can learn, I can learn.’

‘Eh, to be sure,’ said Dolly, gently. ‘I’ve seen men as are wonderful handy wi’ children. The men are awk’ard and contrairy mostly, God help ’em—but when the drink’s out of ’em, they aren’t unsensible, though they’re bad for leeching and bandaging—so fiery and impatient. You see this goes first, next the skin,’ proceeded Dolly, taking up the little shirt, and putting it on.

‘Yes,’ said Marner, docilely, bringing his eyes very close, that they might be initiated in the mysteries; whereupon Baby seized his head with both her small arms, and put her lips against his face with purring noises.

‘See there,’ said Dolly, with a woman’s tender tact, ‘she’s fondest o’ you. She wants to go o’ your lap, I’ll be bound. Go, then: take her, Master Marner; you can put the things on, and then you can say as you’ve done for her from the first of her coming to you.’

Marner took her on his lap, trembling with an emotion mysterious to himself, at something unknown dawning on his life. Thought and feeling were so confused within him, that if he had tried to give them utterance, he could only have said that the child was come instead of the gold—that the gold had turned into the child. He took the garments from Dolly, and put them on under her teaching; interrupted, of course, by Baby’s gymnastics.

‘There, then! why, you take to it quite easy, Master Marner,’ said Dolly; ‘but what shall you do when you’re forced to sit in your loom? For she’ll get busier and mischievouser every day—she will, bless her. It’s lucky as you’ve got that high hearth i’stead of a grate, for that

keeps the fire more out of her reach ; but if you've got anything as can be spilt or broke, or as is fit to cut her fingers off, she'll be at it—and it is but right you should know.'

Silas meditated a little while in some perplexity. 'I'll tie her to the leg o' the loom,' he said at last—'tie her with a good long strip o' something.'

'Well, mayhap that'll do, as it's a little gell, for they're easier persuaded to sit i' one place nor the lads. I know what the lads are ; for I've had four—four I've had, God knows—and if you was to take and tie 'em up, they'd make a fighting and a crying as if you was ringing pigs. But I'll bring you my little chair, and some bits o' red rag and things for her to play wi' ; an' she'll sit and chatter to 'em as if they was alive. Eh, if it wasn't a sin to the lads to wish 'em made different, bless 'em, I should ha' been glad for one of 'em to be a little gell ; and to think as I could ha' taught her to scour, and mend, and the knitting, and everything. But I can teach 'em this little un, Master Marner, when he gets old enough.'

'But she'll be my little un,' said Marner, rather hastily. 'She'll be nobody else's.'

'No, to be sure ; you'll have a right to her if you're a father to her, and bring her up according. But,' added Dolly, coming to a point which she had determined beforehand to touch upon, 'you must bring her up like christened folks's children, and take her to church, and let her learn her catechize, as my little Aaron can say off—the "I believe," and everything, and "hurt nobody by word or deed,"—as well as if he was the clerk. That's what you must do, Master Marner, if you'd do the right thing by the orphin child.'

Marner's pale face flushed suddenly under a new anxiety. His mind was too busy trying to give some definite bearing to Dolly's words for him to think of answering her.

'And it's my belief,' she went on, 'as the poor little creatur has never been christened, and it's nothing but right as the parson should be spoke to ; and if you was

noways unwilling, I'd talk to Mr. Macey about it this very day. For if the child ever went anyways wrong, and you hadn't done your part by it, Master Marner—'noculation, and everything to save it from harm—it 'ud be a thorn i' your bed for ever o' this side the grave; and I can't think as it 'ud be easy lying down for anybody when they'd got to another world, if they hadn't done their part by the helpless children as come wi'out their own asking.'

Dolly herself was disposed to be silent for some time now, for she had spoken from the depths of her own simple belief, and was much concerned to know whether her words would produce the desired effect on Silas. He was puzzled and anxious, for Dolly's word 'christened' conveyed no distinct meaning to him. He had only heard of baptism, and had only seen the baptism of grown-up men and women.

'What is it as you mean by "christened"?' he said at last, timidly. 'Won't folks be good to her with-out it?'

'Dear, dear! Master Marner,' said Dolly, with gentle distress and compassion. 'Had you never no father nor mother as taught you to say your prayers, and as there's good words and good things to keep us from harm?'

'Yes,' said Silas, in a low voice; 'I know a deal about that—used to, used to. But your ways are different: my country was a good way off.' He paused a few moments, and then added, more decidedly, 'But I want to do everything as can be done for the child. And whatever's right for it i' this country, and you think 'ull do it good, I'll act according, if you'll tell me.'

'Well, then, Master Marner,' said Dolly, inwardly rejoiced, 'I'll ask Mr. Macey to speak to the parson about it; and you must fix on a name for it, because it must have a name giv' it when it's christened.'

'My mother's name was Hephzibah,' said Silas, 'and my little sister was named after her.'

'Eh, that's a hard name,' said Dolly. 'I partly think it isn't a christened name.'

'It's a Bible name,' said Silas, *old ideas recurring.*

'Then I've no call to speak again' it,' said Dolly, rather startled by Silas's knowledge on this head; 'but you see I'm no scholar, and I'm slow at catching the words. My husband says I'm allays like as if I was putting the haft for the handle—that's what he says—for he's very sharp, God help him. But it was awk'ard calling your little sister by such a hard name, when you'd got nothing big to say, like—wasn't it, Master Marner?'

'We called her Eppie,' said Silas.

'Well, if it was noways wrong to shorten the name, it 'ud be a deal handier. And so I'll go now, Master Marner, and I'll speak about the christening afore dark; and I wish you the best o' luck, and it's my belief as it'll come to you, if you do what's right by the orphin child;—and there's the 'noculation to be seen to; and as to washing its bits o' things, you need look to nobody but me, for I can do 'em wi' one hand when I've got my suds about. Eh, the blessed angil! You'll let me bring my Aaron one o' these days, and he'll show her his little cart as his father's made for him, and the black-and-white pup as he's got a-rearing.'

Baby *was* christened, the rector deciding that a double baptism was the lesser risk to incur; and on this occasion Silas, making himself as clean and tidy as he could, appeared for the first time within the church, and shared in the observances held sacred by his neighbours. He was quite unable, by means of anything he heard or saw, to identify the Raveloe religion with his old faith: if he could at any time in his previous life have done so, it must have been by the aid of a strong feeling ready to vibrate with sympathy, rather than by a comparison of phrases and ideas; and now for long years that feeling had been dormant. He had no distinct idea about the baptism and the church-going, except that Dolly had said it was for the good of the child; and in this way, as the weeks grew to months, the child created fresh and fresh links between his life and the lives from which he had hitherto shrunk continually into narrower isola-

tion. Unlike the gold which needed nothing, and must be worshipped in close-locked solitude—which was hidden away from the daylight, was deaf to the song of birds, and started to no human tones—Eppie was a creature of endless claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine, and living sounds, and living movements; making trial of everything, with trust in new joy, and stirring the human kindness in all eyes that looked on her. The gold had kept his thoughts in an ever-repeated circle, leading to nothing, beyond itself; but Eppie was an object compacted of changes and hopes that forced his thoughts onward, and carried them far away from their old eager-pacing towards the same blank limit—carried them away to the new things that would come with the coming years, when Eppie would have learned to understand how her father Silas cared for her; and made him look for images of that time in the ties and charities that bound together the families of the neighbours. The gold had asked that he should sit weaving longer and longer, deafened and blinded more and more to all things except the monotony of his loom and the repetition of his web; but Eppie called him away from his weaving, and made him think all its pauses a holiday, reawakening his senses with her fresh life, even to the old winter-flies that came crawling forth in the early spring sunshine, and warming him into joy because she had joy.

And when the sunshine grew strong and lasting, so that the buttercups were thick in the meadows, Silas might be seen in the sunny mid-day, or in the late afternoon when the shadows were lengthening under the hedgerows, strolling out with uncovered head to carry Eppie beyond the Stone-pits to where the flowers grew, till they reached some favourite bank where he could sit down, while Eppie toddled to pluck the flowers, and make remarks to the winged things that murmured happily above the bright petals, calling 'Dad-dad's' attention continually by bringing him the flowers. Then she would turn her ear to some sudden bird-note, and Silas learned to please her by making

signs of <sup>silence & stillness</sup> hushed stillness, that they might listen for the note to come again : so that when it came, she set up her small back and laughed with gurgling triumph. <sup>Su.</sup> Sitting on the banks in this way, Silas began to look <sup>exa</sup> for the once familiar herbs again ; and as the leaves, with their unchanged outline and markings, lay on his palm, there was a sense of crowding remembrances from which he turned away timidly, taking refuge in Eppie's little world, that lay lightly on his enfeebled spirit.

As the child's mind was growing into knowledge, his mind was growing into memory : as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied in a cold narrow prison, was unfolding too, and trembling gradually into full consciousness.

It was an influence which must gather force with every new year : the tones that stirred Silas's heart grew articulate, and called for more distinct answers ; shapes and sounds grew clearer for Eppie's eyes and ears, and there was more that 'Dad-dad' was imperatively required to notice and account for. Also, by the time Eppie was three years old, she developed a fine capacity for mischief, and for devising ingenious ways of being troublesome, which found much exercise, not only for Silas's patience, but for his watchfulness and penetration. Sorely was poor Silas puzzled on such occasions by the incompatible demands of love. Dolly Winthrop told him punishment was good for Eppie, and that, as for rearing a child without making it tingle a little in soft and safe places now and then, it was not to be done.

'To be sure, there's another thing you might do, Master Marner,' added Dolly, meditatively : 'you might shut her up once i' the coal-hole. That was what I did wi' Aaron ; for I was that silly wi' the youngest lad, as I could never bear to smack him. Not as I could find i' my heart to let him stay i' the coal-hole more nor a minute, but it was enough to colly him all over, so as he must be new washed and dressed, and it was as good as a rod to him—that was. But I put it upon your conscience, Master Marner, as there's one of 'em you

must choose—ayther smacking or the coal-hole—else she'll get so masterful, there 'll be no holding her.'

Silas was impressed with the melancholy truth of this last remark; but his force of mind failed before the only two penal methods open to him, not only because it was painful to him to hurt Eppie, but because he trembled at a moment's contention with her, lest she should love him the less for it. Let even an affectionate Goliath get himself tied to a small tender thing, dreading to hurt it by pulling, and dreading still more to snap the cord, and which of the two, pray, will be master? It was clear that Eppie, with her short toddling steps, must lead father Silas a pretty dance on any fine morning when circumstances favoured mischief.

For example. He had wisely chosen a broad strip of linen as a means of fastening her to his loom when he was busy: it made a broad belt round her waist, and was long enough to allow of her reaching the truckle-bed and sitting down on it, but not long enough for her to attempt any dangerous climbing. One bright summer's morning Silas had been more engrossed than usual in 'setting up' a new piece of work, an occasion on which his scissors were in requisition. These scissors, owing to an especial warning of Dolly's, had been kept carefully out of Eppie's reach; but the click of them had had a peculiar attraction for her ear, and, watching the results of that click, she had derived the philosophic lesson that the same cause would produce the same effect. Silas had seated himself in his loom, and the noise of weaving had begun; but he had left his scissors on a ledge which Eppie's arm was long enough to reach; and now, like a small mouse, watching her opportunity, she stole quietly from her corner, secured the scissors, and toddled to the bed again, setting up her back as a mode of concealing the fact. She had a distinct intention as to the use of the scissors; and having cut the linen strip in a jagged but effectual manner, in two moments she had run out at the open door where the sunshine was inviting her, while poor Silas believed her to be a better child than usual. It was not until he happened



to need his scissors that the terrible fact burst upon him: Eppie had run out by herself—had perhaps fallen into the Stone-pit. Silas, shaken by the worst fear that could have befallen him, rushed out, calling ‘Eppie!’ and ran eagerly about the unenclosed space, exploring the dry cavities into which she might have fallen, and then gazing with questioning dread at the smooth red surface of the water. The cold drops stood on his brow. How long had she been out? There was one hope—that she had crept through the stile and got into the fields where he habitually took her to stroll. But the grass was high in the meadow, and there was no descrying her, if she were there, except by a close search that would be a trespass on Mr. Osgood’s crop. Still, that misdemeanour must be committed; and poor Silas, after peering all round the hedgerows, traversed the grass, beginning with perturbed vision to see Eppie behind every group of red sorrel, and to see her moving always farther off as he approached. The meadow was searched in vain; and he got over the stile into the next field, looking with dying hope towards a small pond which was now reduced to its summer shallowness, so as to leave a wide margin of good adhesive mud. Here, however, sat Eppie, discoursing cheerfully to her own small boot, which she was using as a bucket to convey the water into a deep hoof-mark, while her little naked foot was planted comfortably on a cushion of olive-green mud. A red-headed calf was observing her with alarmed doubt through the opposite hedge.

Here was clearly a case of aberration in a christened child which demanded severe treatment; but Silas, overcome with convulsive joy at finding his treasure again, could do nothing but snatch her up, and cover her with half-sobbing kisses. It was not until he had carried her home, and had begun to think of the necessary washing, that he recollected the need that he should punish Eppie, and ‘make her remember.’ The idea that she might run away again and come to harm, gave him unusual resolution, and for the first time he

determined to try the coal-hole—a small closet near the hearth.

‘Naughty, naughty Eppie,’ he suddenly began, holding her on his knee, and pointing to her muddy feet and clothes—‘naughty to cut with the scissors, and run away. Eppie must go into the coal-hole for being naughty. Daddy must put her in the coal-hole.’

He half expected that this would be shock enough, and that Eppie would begin to cry. But instead of that, she began to shake herself on his knee, as if the proposition opened a pleasing novelty. Seeing that he must proceed to extremities, he put her into the coal-hole, and held the door closed, with a trembling sense that he was using a strong measure. For a moment there was silence, but then came a little cry, ‘Opy, opy!’ and Silas let her out again, saying, ‘Now Eppie ’ull never be naughty again, else she must go in the coal-hole—a black naughty place.’

The weaving must stand still a long while this morning, for now Eppie must be washed and have clean clothes on; but it was to be hoped that this punishment would have a lasting effect, and save time in future—though, perhaps, it would have been better if Eppie had cried more.

In half an hour she was clean again, and Silas having turned his back to see what he could do with the linen band, threw it down again, with the reflection that Eppie would be good without fastening for the rest of the morning. He turned round again, and was going to place her in her little chair near the loom, when she peeped out at him with black face and hands again and said, ‘Eppie in de toal-hole!’

This total failure of the coal-hole discipline shook Silas’s belief in the efficacy of punishment. ‘She’d take it all for fun,’ he observed to Dolly, ‘if I didn’t hurt her, and that I can’t do, Mrs. Winthrop. If she makes me a bit o’ trouble, I can bear it. And she’s got no tricks but what she’ll grow out of.’

‘Well, that’s partly true, Master Marner,’ said Dolly sympathetically; ‘and if you can’t bring your minc

to frighten her off touching things, you must do what you can to keep 'em out of her way. That's what I do wi' the pups as the lads are allays a-rearing. They will worry and gnaw—worry and gnaw they will, if it was one's Sunday cap as hung anywhere so as they could drag it. They know no difference, God help 'em: it's the pushing o' the teeth as sets them on, that's what it is.

So Eppie was reared without punishment, the burden of her misdeeds being borne vicariously by father Silas. The stone hut was made a soft nest for her, lined with downy patience: and also in the world that lay beyond the stone hut for her, she knew nothing of frowns and denials.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of carrying her and his yarn or linen at the same time, Silas took her with him in most of his journeys to the farm-houses, unwilling to leave her behind at Dolly Winthrop's, who was always ready to take care of her; and little curly-headed Eppie, the weaver's child, became an object of interest at several out-lying homesteads, as well as in the village. Hitherto he had been treated very much as if he had been a useful gnome or brownie—a queer and unaccountable creature, who must necessarily be looked at with wondering curiosity and repulsion, and with whom one would be glad to make all greetings and bargains as brief as possible, but who must be dealt with in a propitiatory way, and occasionally have a present of pork or garden-stuff to carry home with him, seeing that without him there was no getting the yarn woven. But now Silas met with open smiling faces and cheerful questioning, as a person whose satisfactions and difficulties could be understood. Everywhere he must sit a little and talk about the child, and words of interest were always ready for him: 'Ah, Master Marner, you'll be lucky if she takes the measles soon and easy!'—or, 'Why, there isn't many lone men 'ud ha' been wishing to take up with a little un like that: but I reckon the weaving makes you handier than men as do out-door work—you're partly as handy as a woman, for weaving

comes next to spinning.' Elderly masters and mistresses, seated observantly in large kitchen arm-chairs, shook their heads over the difficulties attendant on rearing children, felt Eppie's round arms and legs, and pronounced them remarkably firm, and told Silas that, if she turned out well (which, however, there was no telling), it would be a fine thing for him to have a steady lass to do for him when he got helpless. Servant maidens were fond of carrying her out to look at the hens and chickens, or to see if any cherries could be shaken down in the orchard; and the small boys and girls approached her slowly, with cautious movement and steady gaze, like little dogs face to face with one of their own kind, till attraction had reached the point at which the soft lips were put out for a kiss. No child was afraid of approaching Silas when Eppie was near him: there was no repulsion around him now, either for young or old; for the little child had come to link him once more with the whole world. There was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and there was love between the child and the world—from men and women with parental looks and tones, to the red lady-birds and the round pebbles.

Silas began now to think of Raveloe life entirely in relation to Eppie: she must have everything that was a good in Raveloe; and he listened docilely, that he might come to understand better what this life was, from which, for fifteen years, he had stood aloof as from a strange thing, with which he could have no communion: as some man who has a precious plant to which he would give a nurturing home in a new soil, thinks of the rain and sunshine, and all influences, in relation to his nursling, and asks industriously for all knowledge that will help him to satisfy the wants of the searching roots, or to guard leaf and bud from invading harm. The disposition to hoard had been utterly crushed at the very first by the loss of his long-stored gold: the coins he earned afterwards seemed as irrelevant as stones brought to complete a house suddenly buried by an earthquake; the sense of

bereavement was too heavy upon him for the old thrill of satisfaction to arise again at the touch of the newly-earned coin. And now something had come to replace his hoard which gave a growing purpose to the earnings, drawing his hope and joy continually onward beyond the money.

In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction : a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward ; and the hand may be a little child's.

## CHAPTER XV.

THERE was one person, as you will believe, who watched with keener though more hidden interest than any other the prosperous growth of Eppie under the weaver's care. He dared not do anything that would imply a stronger interest in a poor man's adopted child than could be expected from the kindness of the young Squire, when a chance meeting suggested a little present to a simple old fellow whom others noticed with goodwill ; but he told himself that the time would come when he might do something towards furthering the welfare of his daughter without incurring suspicions. Was he very uneasy in the mean time at his inability to give his daughter her birthright ? I cannot say that he was. The child was being taken care of, and would very likely be happy, as people in humble stations often were—happier, perhaps, than those who are brought up in luxury.

That famous ring that pricked its owner when he forgot duty and followed desire—I wonder if it pricked very hard when he set out on the chase, or whether it pricked but lightly then, and only pierced to the quick

when the chase had long been ended, and hope, folding her wings, looked backward and became regret ?

Godfrey Cass's cheek and eye were brighter than ever now. He was so undivided in his aims, that he seemed like a man of firmness. No Dunsey had come back : people had made up their minds that he was gone for a soldier, or gone 'out of the country,' and no one cared to be specific in their inquiries on a subject delicate to a respectable family. Godfrey had ceased to see the shadow of Dunsey across his path ; and the path now lay straight forward to the accomplishment of his best, longest-cherished wishes. Everybody said Mr. Godfrey had taken the right turn ; and it was pretty clear what would be the end of things, for there were not many days in the week that he was not seen riding to the Warrens. Godfrey himself, when he was asked jocosely if the day had been fixed, smiled with the pleasant consciousness of a lover who could say 'yes,' if he liked. He felt a reformed man, delivered from temptation ; and the vision of his future life seemed to him as a promised land for which he had no cause to fight. He saw himself with all his happiness centred on his own hearth, where Nancy would smile on him as he played with the children.

And that other child—not on the hearth—he would not forget it ; he would see that it was well provided for. That was a father's duty.

## PART II.

### CHAPTER XVI.

It was a bright autumn Sunday, sixteen years after Silas Marner had found his new treasure on the hearth. The bells of the old Raveloe church were ringing the cheerful peal which told that the morning service was ended; and out of the arched doorway in the tower came slowly, retarded by friendly greetings and questions, the richer parishioners who had chosen this bright Sunday morning as eligible for church-going. It was the rural fashion of that time for the more important members of the congregation to depart first, while their humbler neighbours waited and looked on, stroking their bent heads or dropping their curtsies to any large ratepayer who turned to notice them.

Foremost among these advancing groups of well-clad people, there are some whom we shall recognise, in spite of Time, who has laid his hand on them all. The tall blonde man of forty is not much changed in feature from the Godfrey Cass of six-and-twenty: he is only fuller in flesh, and has only lost the indefinable look of youth—a loss which is marked even when the eye is undulled and the wrinkles are not yet come. Perhaps the pretty woman, not much younger than he, who is leaning on his arm, is more changed than her husband: the lovely bloom that used to be always on her cheek now comes but fitfully, with the fresh morning air or with some strong surprise; yet to all who love human faces best for what they tell of human experience,

Nancy's beauty has a heightened interest. Often the soul is ripened into fuller goodness while age has spread an ugly film, so that mere glances can never divine the preciousness of the fruit. But the years have not been so cruel to Nancy. The firm yet placid mouth, the clear veracious glance of the brown eyes, speak now of a nature that has been tested and has kept its highest qualities; and even the costume, with its dainty neatness and purity, has more significance now the coquetry of youth can have nothing to do with it.

Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass (any higher title has died away from Raveloe lips since the old Squire was gathered to his fathers, and his inheritance was divided) have turned round to look for the tall aged man and the plainly-dressed woman who are a little behind—Nancy having observed that they must wait for 'father and Priscilla'—and now they all turn into a narrower path leading across the churchyard to a small gate opposite the Red House. We will not follow them now; for may there not be some others in this departing congregation whom we should like to see again—some of those who are not likely to be handsomely clad, and whom we may not recognise so easily as the master and mistress of the Red House?

But it is impossible to mistake Silas Marner. His large brown eyes seem to have gathered a longer vision, as is the way with eyes that have been short-sighted in early life, and they have a less vague, a more answering look; but in everything else one sees signs of a frame much enfeebled by the lapse of the sixteen years. The weaver's bent shoulders and white hair give him almost the look of advanced age, though he is not more than five-and-fifty; but there is the freshest blossom of youth close by his side—a blonde dimpled girl of eighteen, who has vainly tried to chastise her curly auburn hair into smoothness under her brown bonnet: the hair ripples as obstinately as a brooklet under the March breeze, and the little ringlets burst away from the restraining comb behind and show themselves below the bonnet-crown. Eppie cannot help being rather



vexed about her hair, for there is no other girl in Raveloe who has hair at all like it, and she thinks hair ought to be smooth. She does not like to be blameworthy even in small things: you see how neatly her prayer-book is folded in her spotted handkerchief.

That good-looking young fellow, in a new fustian suit, who walks behind her, is not quite sure upon the question of hair in the abstract, when Eppie puts it to him, and thinks that perhaps straight hair is the best in general, but he doesn't want Eppie's hair to be different. She surely divines that there is some one behind her who is thinking about her very particularly, and mustering courage to come to her side as soon as they are out in the lane, else why should she look rather shy, and take care not to turn away her head from her father Silas, to whom she keeps murmuring little sentences as to who was at church and who was not at church, and how pretty the red mountain-ash is over the Rectory wall?

'I wish *we* had a little garden, father, with double daisies in, like Mrs. Winthrop's,' said Eppie, when they were out in the lane; 'only they say it 'ud take a deal of digging and bringing fresh soil—and you couldn't do that, could you, father? Anyhow, I shouldn't like you to do it, for it 'ud be too hard work for you.'

'Yes, I could do it, child, if you want a bit o' garden: these long evenings, I could work at taking in a little bit o' the waste, just enough for a root or two o' flowers for you; and again, i' the morning, I could have a turn wi' the spade before I sat down to the loom. Why didn't you tell me before as you wanted a bit o' garden?'

'I can dig it for you, Master Marner,' said the young man in fustian, who was now by Eppie's side, entering into the conversation without the trouble of formalities. 'It'll be play to me after I've done my day's work, or any odd bits o' time when the work's slack. And I'll bring you some soil from Mr. Cass's garden—he'll let me, and willing.'

'Eh, Aaron, my lad, are you there?' said Silas;

'I wasn't aware of you; for when Eppie's talking o' things, I see nothing but what she's a-saying. Well, if you could help me with the digging, we might get her a bit o' garden all the sooner.'

'Then, if you'll think well and good,' said Aaron, 'I'll come to the Stone-pits this afternoon, and we'll settle what land's to be taken in, and I'll get up an hour earlier i' the morning, and begin on it.'

'But not if you don't promise me not to work at the hard digging, father,' said Eppie. 'For I shouldn't ha' said anything about it,' she added, half-bashfully, half-roguishly, 'only Mrs. Winthrop said as Aaron 'ud be so good, and——'

'And you might ha' known it without mother telling you,' said Aaron. 'And Master Marner knows too, I hope, as I'm able and willing to do a turn o' work for him, and he won't do me the unkindness to anyways take it out o' my hands.'

'There, now, father, you won't work in it till it's all easy,' said Eppie, 'and you and me can mark out the beds, and make holes and plant the roots. It'll be a deal livelier at the Stone-pits when we've got some flowers, for I always think the flowers can see us and know what we're talking about. And I'll have a bit o' rosemary, and bergamot, and thyme, because they're so sweet-smelling; but there's no lavender only in the gentlefolks' gardens, I think.'

'That's no reason why you shouldn't have some,' said Aaron, 'for I can bring you slips of anything; I'm forced to cut no end of 'em when I'm gardening, and throw 'em away mostly. There's a big bed o' lavender at the Red House: the missis is very fond of it.'

'Well,' said Silas, gravely, 'so as you don't make free for us, or ask for anything as is worth much at the Red House: for Mr. Cass's been so good to us, and built us up the new end o' the cottage, and given us beds and things, as I couldn't abide to be imposin' for garden-stuff or anything else.'

'No, no, there's no imposin',' said Aaron; 'there's never a garden in all the parish but what there's endless

waste in it for want o' somebody as could use everything up. It's what I think to myself sometimes, as there need nobody run short o' victuals if the land was made the most on, and there was never a morsel but what could find its way to a mouth. It sets one thinking o' that—gardening does. But I must go back now, else mother 'ull be in trouble as I aren't there.'

'Bring her with you this afternoon, Aaron,' said Eppie; 'I shouldn't like to fix about the garden, and her not know everything from the first—should *you*, father?'

'Aye, bring her if you can, Aaron,' said Silas; 'she's sure to have a word to say as'll help us to set things on their right end.'

Aaron turned back up the village, while Silas and Eppie went on up the lonely sheltered lane.

'Oh, daddy!' she began, when they were in privacy, clasping and squeezing Silas's arm, and skipping round to give him an energetic kiss. 'My little old daddy! I'm so glad. I don't think I shall want anything else when we've got a little garden; and I knew Aaron would dig it for us,' she went on with roguish triumph—'I knew that very well.'

'You're a deep little puss, you are,' said Silas, with the mild passive happiness of love-crowned age in his face; 'but you'll make yourself fine and beholden to Aaron.'

'Oh, no, I shan't,' said Eppie, laughing and frisking; 'he likes it.'

'Come, come, let me carry your prayer-book, else you'll be dropping it, jumping i' that way.'

Eppie was now aware that her behaviour was under observation, but it was only the observation of a friendly donkey, browsing with a log fastened to his foot—a meek donkey, not scornfully critical of human trivialities, but thankful to share in them, if possible, by getting his nose scratched; and Eppie did not fail to gratify him with her usual notice, though it was attended with the inconvenience of his following them, painfully, up to the very door of their home.

But the sound of a sharp bark inside, as Eppie put the key in the door, modified the donkey's views, and he limped away again without bidding. The sharp bark was the sign of an excited welcome that was awaiting them from a knowing brown terrier, who, after dancing at their legs in a hysterical manner, rushed with a worrying noise at a tortoise-shell kitten under the loom, and then rushed back with a sharp bark again, as much as to say, 'I have done my duty by this feeble creature, you perceive;' while the lady-mother of the kitten sat sunning her white bosom in the window, and looked round with a sleepy air of expecting caresses, though she was not going to take any trouble for them.

The presence of this happy animal life was not the only change which had come over this interior of the stone cottage. There was no bed now in the living-room, and the small space was well filled with decent furniture, all bright and clean enough to satisfy Dolly Winthrop's eye. The oaken table and three-cornered oaken chair were hardly what was likely to be seen in so poor a cottage: they had come, with the beds and other things, from the Red House; for Mr. Godfrey Cass, as every one said in the village, did very kindly by the weaver; and it was nothing but right a man should be looked on and helped by those who could afford it, when he had brought up an orphan child, and been father and mother to her—and had lost his money too, so as he had nothing but what he worked for week by week, and when the weaving was going down too—for there was less and less flax spun—and Master Marner was none so young. Nobody was jealous of the weaver, for he was regarded as an exceptional person, whose claims on neighbourly help were not to be matched in Raveloe. Any superstition that remained concerning him had taken an entirely new colour; and Mr. Macey, now a very feeble old man of fourscore and six, never seen except in his chimney corner or sitting in the sunshine at his door-sill, was of opinion that when a man had done what Silas had done by an orphan child, it was a sign that his money would come to light again,

or leastwise that the robber would be made to answer for it—for, as Mr. Macey observed of himself, his faculties were as strong as ever.

Silas sat down now and watched Eppie with a satisfied gaze as she spread the clean cloth, and set on it the potato-pie, warmed up slowly in a safe Sunday fashion, by being put into a dry pot over a slowly-dying fire, as the best substitute for an oven. For Silas would not consent to have a grate and oven added to his conveniences: he loved the old brick hearth as he had loved his brown pot—and was it not there when he had found Eppie? The gods of the hearth exist for us still; and let all new faith be tolerant of that fetishism, lest it bruise its own roots.

Silas ate his dinner more silently than usual, soon laying down his knife and fork, and watching half-abstractedly Eppie's play with Snap and the cat, by which her own dining was made rather a lengthy business. Yet it was a sight that might well arrest wandering thoughts: Eppie, with the rippling radiance of her hair and the whiteness of her rounded chin and throat set off by the dark-blue cotton gown, laughing merrily as the kitten held on with her four claws to one shoulder, like a design for a jug-handle, while Snap on the right hand and puss on the other put up their paws towards a morsel which she held out of the reach of both—Snap occasionally desisting in order to remonstrate with the cat by a cogent worrying growl on the greediness and futility of her conduct; till Eppie relented, caressed them both, and divided the morsel between them.

But at last Eppie, glancing at the clock, checked the play, and said, 'Oh, daddy, you're wanting to go into the sunshine to smoke your pipe. But I must clear away first, so as the house may be tidy when godmother comes. I'll make haste—I won't be long.'

Silas had taken to smoking a pipe daily during the last two years, having been strongly urged to it by the sages of Raveloe, as a practice 'good for the fits'; and this advice was sanctioned by Dr. Kimble, on the ground that it was as well to try what could do no harm

—a principle which was made to answer for a great deal of work in that gentleman's medical practice. Silas did not highly enjoy smoking, and often wondered how his neighbours could be so fond of it; but a humble sort of acquiescence in what was held to be good, had become a strong habit of that new self which had been developed in him since he had found Eppie on his hearth: it had been the only clue his bewildered mind could hold by in cherishing this young life that had been sent to him out of the darkness into which his gold had departed. By seeking what was needful for Eppie, by sharing the effect that everything produced on her, he had himself come to appropriate the forms of custom and belief which were the mould of Raveloe life; and as, with reawakening sensibilities, memory also reawakened, he had begun to ponder over the elements of his old faith, and blend them with his new impressions, till he recovered a consciousness of unity between his past and present. The sense of presiding goodness and the human trust which come with all pure peace and joy had given him a dim impression that there had been some error, some mistake, which had thrown that dark shadow over the days of his best years; and as it grew more and more easy to him to open his mind to Dolly Winthrop, he gradually communicated to her all he could describe of his early life. The communication was necessarily a slow and difficult process, for Silas's meagre power of explanation was not aided by any readiness of interpretation in Dolly, whose narrow outward experience gave her no key to strange customs, and made every novelty a source of wonder that arrested them at every step of the narrative. It was only by fragments, and at intervals which left Dolly time to revolve what she had heard till it acquired some familiarity for her, that Silas at last arrived at the climax of the sad story—the drawing of lots, and its false testimony concerning him; and this had to be repeated in several interviews, under new questions on her part as to the nature of this plan for detecting the guilty and clearing the innocent.

'And yourn's the same Bible, you're sure o' that, Master Marner—the Bible as you brought wi' you from that country—it's the same as what they're got at church, and what Eppie's a-learning to read in?'

'Yes,' said Silas, 'every bit the same; and there's drawing o' lots in the Bible, mind you,' he added, in a lower tone.

'Oh, dear, dear,' said Dolly, in a grieved voice, as if she were hearing an unfavourable report of a sick man's case. She was silent for some minutes; at last she said—

'There's wise folks, happen, as know how it all is; the parson knows, I'll be bound; but it takes big words to tell them things, and such as poor folks can't make much out on. I can never rightly know the meaning o' what I hear at church, only a bit here and there, but I know it's good words—I do. But what lies upo' your mind—it's this, Master Marner: as, if Them above had done the right thing by you, They'd never ha' let you be turned out for a wicked thief when you was innocent.'

'Ah!' said Silas, who had now come to understand Dolly's phraseology, 'that was what fell on me like as if it had been red-hot iron; because, you see, there was nobody as cared for me or clave to me above nor below. And him as I'd gone out and in wi' for ten years and more, since when we was lads and went halves—mine own famil'ar friend, in whom I trusted, had lifted up his heel again' me, and worked to ruin me.'

Eh, but he was a bad un—I can't think as there's another such,' said Dolly. 'But I'm o'ercome, Master Marner; I'm like as if I'd waked and didn't know whether it was night or morning. I feel somehow as sure as I do when I've laid something up though I can't justly put my hand on it, as there was a right in what happened to you, if one could but make it out; and you'd no call to lose heart as you did. But we'll talk on it again; for sometimes things come into my head when I'm leeching or poulticing, or such, as I could never think on when I was sitting still.'

Dolly was too useful a woman not to have many

opportunities of illumination of the kind she alluded to, and she was not long before she recurred to the subject.

'Master Marner,' she said, one day that she came to bring home Eppie's washing, 'I've been sore puzzled for a good bit wi' that trouble o' yourn and the drawing o' lots; and it got twisted back'ards and for'ards, as I didn't know which end to lay hold on. But it come to me all clear like, that night when I was sitting up wi' poor Bessy Fawkes, as is dead and left her children behind, God help 'em—it come to me as clear as daylight; but whether I've got hold on it now, or can anyways bring it to my tongue's end, that I don't know. For I've often a deal inside me as 'll niver come out; and for what you talk o' your folks in your old country niver saying prayers by heart nor saying 'em out of a book, they must be wonderful cliver; for if I didn't know 'Our Father,' and little bits o' good words as I can carry out o' church wi' me, I might down o' my knees every night, but nothing could I say.'

'But you can mostly say something as I can make sense on, Mrs. Winthrop,' said Silas.

'Well, then, Master Marner, it come to me summat like this: I can make nothing o' the drawing o' lots and the answer coming wrong; it 'ud mayhap take the parson to tell that, and he could only tell us i' big words. But what come to me as clear as the daylight, it was when I was troubling over poor Bessy Fawkes, and it allays comes into my head when I'm sorry for folks, and feel as I can't do a power to help 'em, not if I was to get up i' the middle o' the night—it comes into my head as Them above has got a deal tenderer heart nor what I've got—for I can't be anyways better nor Them as made me, and if anything looks hard to me, it's because there's things I don't know on; and for the matter o' that, there may be plenty o' things I don't know on, for it's little as I know—that it is. And so, while I was thinking o' that, you come into my mind, Master Marner, and it all come pouring in:—if I felt i' my inside what was the right and just thing by you,



and them as prayed and drawed the lots, all but that wicked un, if *they* 'd ha' done the right thing by you if they could, isn't there Them as was at the making on us, and knows better and has a better will? And that's all as ever I can be sure on, and everything else is a big puzzle to me when I think on it. For there was the fever come and took off them as were full-growed, and left the helpless children; and there's the breaking o' limbs; and them as 'ud do right and be sober have to suffer by them as are contrairy—eh, there's trouble i' this world, and there's things as we can niver make out the rights on. And all as we've got to do is to trusten, Master Marner—to do the right thing as fur as we know, and to trusten. For if us as knows so little can see a -bit o' good and rights, we may be sure as there's a good and a rights bigger nor what we can know—I feel it i' my own inside as it must be so. And if you could but ha' gone on trustening, Master Marner, you wouldn't ha' run away from your fellow-creatures and been so lone.'

'Ah, but that 'ud ha' been hard,' said Silas, in an undertone; 'it 'ud ha' been hard to trusten then.'

'And so it would,' said Dolly, almost with compunction; 'them things are easier said nor done; and I'm partly ashamed o' talking.'

'Nay, nay,' said Silas, 'you're i' the right, Mrs. Winthrop—you're i' the right. There's good i' this world—I've a feeling o' that now; and it makes a man feel as there's a good more nor he can see, i' spite o' the trouble and the wickedness. That drawing o' the lots is dark; but the child was sent to me: there's dealings with us—there's dealings.'

This dialogue took place in Eppie's earlier years, when Silas had to part with her for two hours every day, that she might learn to read at the dame school, after he had vainly tried himself to guide her in that first step to learning. Now that she was grown up, Silas had often been led, in those moments of quiet outpouring which come to people who live together in perfect love, to talk with *her* too of the past, and how and why he had

lived a lonely man until she had been sent to him. For it would have been impossible for him to hide from Eppie that she was not his own child : even if the most delicate reticence on the point could have been expected from Raveloe gossips in her presence, her own questions about her mother could not have been parried, as she grew up, without that complete shrouding of the past which would have made a painful barrier between their minds. So Eppie had long known how her mother had died on the snowy ground, and how she herself had been found on the hearth by father Silas, who had taken her golden curls for his lost guineas brought back to him. The tender and peculiar love with which Silas had reared her in almost inseparable companionship with himself, aided by the seclusion of their dwelling, had preserved her from the lowering influences of the village talk and habits, and had kept her mind in that freshness which is sometimes falsely supposed to be an invariable attribute of rusticity. Perfect love has a breath of poetry which can exalt the relations of the least instructed human beings ; and this breath of poetry had surrounded Eppie from the time when she had followed the bright gleam that beckoned her to Silas's hearth ; so that it is not surprising if, in other things besides her delicate prettiness, she was not quite a common village maiden, but had a touch of refinement and fervour which came from no other teaching than that of tenderly nurtured and unvitiated feeling. She was too childish and simple for her imagination to rove into questions about her unknown father ; for a long while it did not even occur to her that she must have had a father ; and the first time that the idea of her mother having had a husband presented itself to her, was when Silas showed her the wedding-ring which had been taken from the wasted finger, and had been carefully preserved by him in a little lackered box shaped like a shoe. He delivered this box into Eppie's charge when she had grown up, and she often opened it to look at the ring ; but still she thought hardly at all about the father to whom it was the symbol. Had she not

a father very close to her, who loved her better than any real fathers in the village seemed to love their daughters? On the contrary, who her mother was, and how she came to die in that forlornness, were questions that often pressed on Eppie's mind. Her knowledge of Mrs. Winthrop, who was her nearest friend next to Silas, made her feel that a mother must be very precious; and she had again and again asked Silas to tell her how her mother looked, whom she was like, and how he had found her against the furze bush, led towards it by the little footsteps and the outstretched arms. The furze bush was there still; and this afternoon, when Eppie came out with Silas into the sunshine, it was the first object that arrested her eyes and thoughts.

'Father,' she said, in a tone of gentle gravity, which sometimes came like a sadder, slower cadence across her playfulness, 'we shall take the furze bush into the garden; it'll come into the corner, and just against it I'll put snowdrops and crocuses, 'cause Aaron says they won't die out, but'll always get more and more.'

'Ah, child,' said Silas, always ready to talk when he had his pipe in his hand, apparently enjoying the pauses more than the puffs, 'it wouldn't do to leave out the furze bush; and there's nothing prettier, to my thinking, when it's yallow with flowers. But it's just come into my head what we're to do for a fence—mayhap Aaron can help us to a thought; but a fence we must have, else the donkeys and things 'ull come and trample everything down. And fencing's hard to be got at, by what I can make out.'

'Oh, I'll tell you, daddy,' said Eppie, clasping her hands suddenly, after a minute's thought. 'There's lots o' loose stones about, some of 'em not big, and we might lay 'em atop of one another and make a wall. You and me could carry the smallest, and Aaron 'ud carry the rest—I know he would.'

'Eh, my precious un,' said Silas, 'there isn't enough stones to go all round; and as for you carying, why wi' your little arms you couldn't carry a stone no bigger than a turnip. You're dillicate made, my dear,' he

added, with a tender intonation—‘that’s what Mrs. Winthrop says.’

‘Oh, I’m stronger than you think, daddy,’ said Eppie ; ‘and if there wasn’t stones enough to go all round, why they’ll go part o’ the way, and then it’ll be easier to get sticks and things for the rest. See here, round the big pit, what a many stones !’

She skipped forward to the pit, meaning to lift one of the stones and exhibit her strength, but she started back in surprise.

‘Oh, father, just come and look here,’ she exclaimed—‘come and see how the water’s gone down since yesterday. Why, yesterday the pit was ever so full !’

‘Well, to be sure,’ said Silas, coming to her side. ‘Why, that’s the draining they’ve begun on, since harvest, i’ Mr. Osgood’s fields, I reckon. The foreman said to me the other day, when I passed by ’em, “Master Marner,” he said, “I shouldn’t wonder if we lay your bit o’ waste as dry as a bone.” It was Mr. Godfrey Cass, he said, had gone into the draining : he’d been taking these fields o’ Mr. Osgood.’

‘How odd it’ll seem to have the old pit dried up,’ said Eppie, turning away, and stooping to lift rather a large stone. ‘See, daddy, I can carry this quite well,’ she said, going along with much energy for a few steps, but presently letting it fall.

‘Ah, you’re fine and strong, arn’t you ?’ said Silas, while Eppie shook her aching arms and laughed. ‘Come, come, let us go and sit down on the bank against the stile there, and have no more lifting. You might hurt yourself, child. You’d need have somebody to work for you—and my arm isn’t over strong.’

Silas uttered the last sentence slowly, as if it implied more than met the ear ; and Eppie, when they sat down on the bank, nestled close to his side, and, taking hold caressingly of the arm that was not over strong, held it on her lap, while Silas puffed again dutifully at the pipe, which occupied his other arm. An ash in the

hedgerow behind made a fretted screen from the sun, and threw happy playful shadows all about them.

'Father,' said Eppie, very gently, after they had been sitting in silence a little while, 'if I was to be married, ought I to be married with my mother's ring?'

Silas gave an almost imperceptible start, though the question fell in with the undercurrent of thought in his own mind, and then said, in a subdued tone, 'Why, Eppie, have you been a-thinking on it?'

'Only this last week, father,' said Eppie, ingenuously, 'since Aaron talked to me about it.'

'And what did he say?' said Silas, still in the same subdued way, as if he were anxious lest he should fall into the slightest tone that was not for Eppie's good.

'He said he should like to be married, because he was a-going in four-and-twenty, and had got a deal of gardening work, now Mr. Mott's given up; and he goes twice a-week regular to Mr. Cass's, and once to Mr. Os-good's, and they're going to take him on at the Rectory.'

'And who is it as he's wanting to marry?' said Silas, with rather a sad smile.

'Why, me, to be sure, daddy,' said Eppie, with dimpling laughter, kissing her father's cheek; 'as if he'd want to marry anybody else!'

'And you mean to have him, do you?' said Silas.

'Yes, some time,' said Eppie, 'I don't know when. Everybody's married some time, Aaron says. But I told him that wasn't true; for, I said, look at father—he's never been married.'

'No, child,' said Silas, 'your father was a lone man till you was sent to him.'

'But you'll never be lone again, father,' said Eppie, tenderly. 'That was what Aaron said—"I could never think o' taking you away from Master Marner, Eppie." And I said, "It 'ud be no use if you did, Aaron." And he wants us all to live together, so as you needn't work a bit, father, only what's for your own pleasure; and he'd be as good as a son to you—that was what he said.'

'And should you like that, Eppie?' said Silas, looking at her.

'I shouldn't mind it, father,' said Eppie, quite simply. 'And I should like things to be so as you needn't work much. But if it wasn't for that, I'd sooner things didn't change. I'm very happy: I like Aaron to be fond of me, and come and see us often, and behave pretty to you—he always *does* behave pretty to you, doesn't he, father?'

'Yes, child, nobody could behave better,' said Silas, emphatically. 'He's his mother's lad.'

'But I don't want any change,' said Eppie. 'I should like to go on a long, long while, just as we are. Only Aaron does want a change; and he made me cry a bit—only a bit—because he said I didn't care for him, for if I cared for him I should want us to be married, as he did.'

'Eh, my blessed child,' said Silas, laying down his pipe as if it were useless to pretend to smoke any longer, 'you're o'er young to be married. We'll ask Mrs. Winthrop—we'll ask Aaron's mother what *she* thinks: if there's a right thing to do, she'll come at it. But there's this to be thought on, Eppie: things *will* change, whether we like it or not; things won't go on for a long while just as they are and no difference. I shall get older and helpless, and be a burden on you, belike, if I don't go away from you altogether. Not as I mean you'd think me a burden—I know you wouldn't—but it 'ud be hard upon you; and when I look for'ard to that, I like to think as you'd have somebody else besides me—somebody young and strong, as 'll outlast your own life, and take care on you to the end.' Silas paused, and, resting his wrists on his knees, lifted his hands up and down meditatively as he looked on the ground.

'Then, would you like me to be married, father?' said Eppie, with a little trembling in her voice.

'I'll not be the man to say no, Eppie,' said Silas, emphatically; 'but we'll ask your godmother. She'll wish the right thing by you and her son too.'

'There they come, then,' said Eppie. 'Let us go and meet 'em. Oh, the pipe! won't you have it lit

again, father ?' said Eppie, lifting that medicinal appliance from the ground.

'Nay, child,' said Silas, 'I've done enough for to-day. I think, mayhap, a little of it does me more good than so much at once.'

## CHAPTER XVII.

WHILE Silas and Eppie were seated on the bank discoursing in the fleckered shade of the ash tree, Miss Priscilla Lammeter was resisting her sister's arguments, that it would be better to stay tea at the Red House, and let her father have a long nap, than drive home to the Warrens so soon after dinner. The family party (of four only) were seated round the table in the dark wainscoted parlour, with the Sunday dessert before them, of fresh filberts, apples, and pears, duly ornamented with leaves by Nancy's own hand before the bells had rung for church.

A great change has come over the dark wainscoted parlour since we saw it in Godfrey's bachelor days, and under the wifeless reign of the old Squire. Now all is polish, on which no yesterday's dust is ever allowed to settle, from the yard's width of oaken boards round the carpet, to the old Squire's gun and whips and walking-sticks, ranged on the stag's antlers above the mantelpiece. All other signs of sporting and outdoor occupation Nancy has removed to another room ; but she has brought into the Red House the habit of filial reverence, and preserves sacredly in a place of honour these relics of her husband's departed father. The tankards are on the side-table still, but the bossed silver is undimmed by handling, and there are no dregs to send forth unpleasant suggestions : the only prevailing scent is of the lavender and rose-leaves that fill the vases of Derbyshire spar. All is purity and order in this once dreary room, for, fifteen years ago, it was entered by a new presiding spirit.

'Now, father,' said Nancy, 'is there any call for you to go home to tea? Mayn't you just as well stay with us?—such a beautiful evening as it's likely to be.'

The old gentleman had been talking with Godfrey about the increasing poor-rate and the ruinous times, and had not heard the dialogue between his daughters.

'My dear, you must ask Priscilla,' he said, in the once firm voice, now become rather broken. 'She manages me and the farm too.'

'And reason good as I should manage you, father,' said Priscilla, 'else you'd be giving yourself your death with rheumatism. And as for the farm, if anything turns out wrong, as it can't but do in these times, there's nothing kills a man so soon as having nobody to find fault with but himself. It's a deal the best way o' being master, to let somebody else do the ordering, and keep the blaming in your own hands. It 'ud save many a man a stroke I believe.'

'Well, well, my dear,' said her father, with a quiet laugh, 'I didn't say you don't manage for everybody's good.'

'Then manage so as you may stay tea, Priscilla,' said Nancy, putting her hand on her sister's arm affectionately. 'Come now; and we'll go round the garden while father has his nap.'

'My dear child, he'll have a beautiful nap in the gig, for I shall drive. And as for staying tea, I can't hear of it; for there's this dairymaid, now she knows she's to be married, turned Michaelmas, she'd as lieve pour the new milk into the pig-trough as into the pans. That's the way with 'em all: it's as if they thought the world 'ud be new-made because they're to be married. So come and let me put my bonnet on, and there'll be time for us to walk round the garden while the horse is being put in.'

When the sisters were treading the neatly-swept garden-walks, between the bright turf that contrasted pleasantly with the dark cones and arches and wall-like hedges of yew, Priscilla said—

'I'm as glad as anything at your husband's making



that exchange o' land with cousin Osgood, and beginning the dairying. It's a thousand pities you didn't do it before; for it'll give you something to fill your mind. There's nothing like a dairy if folks want a bit o' worrit to make the days pass. For as for rubbing furniture, when you can once see your face in a table there's nothing else to look for; but there's always something fresh with the dairy; for even in the depths o' winter there's some pleasure in conquering the butter, and making it come whether or no. My dear,' added Priscilla, pressing her sister's hand affectionately as they walked side by side, 'you'll never be low when you've got a dairy.'

'Ah, Priscilla,' said Nancy, returning the pressure with a grateful glance of her clear eyes, 'but it won't make up to Godfrey: a dairy's not so much to a man. And it's only what he cares for that ever makes me low. I'm contented with the blessings we have, if he could be contented.'

'It drives me past patience,' said Priscilla, impetuously, 'that way o' the men—always wanting and wanting, and never easy with what they've got: they can't sit comfortable in their chairs when they've neither ache nor pain, but either they must stick a pipe in their mouths, to make 'em better than well, or else they must be swallowing something strong, though they're forced to make haste before the next meal comes in. But, joyful be it spoken, our father was never that sort o' man. And if it had pleased God to make you ugly, like me, so as the men wouldn't ha' run after you, we might have kept to our own family, and had nothing to do with folks as have got uneasy blood in their veins.'

'Oh, don't say so, Priscilla,' said Nancy, repenting that she had called forth this outburst; 'nobody has any occasion to find fault with Godfrey. It's natural he should be disappointed at not having any children: every man likes to have somebody to work for and lay by for, and he always counted so on making a fuss with 'em when they were little. There's many another man

'ud hanker more than he does. He's the best of husbands.'

'Oh, I know,' said Priscilla, smiling sarcastically, 'I know the way o' wives; they set one on to abuse their husbands, and then they turn round on one and praise 'em as if they wanted to sell 'em. But father 'll be waiting for me; we must turn now.'

The large gig with the steady old grey was at the front door, and Mr. Lammeter was already on the stone steps, passing the time in recalling to Godfrey what very fine points Speckle had when his master used to ride him.

'I always *would* have a good horse, you know,' said the old gentleman, not liking that spirited time to be quite effaced from the memory of his juniors.

'Mind you bring Nancy to the Warrens before the week's out, Mr. Cass,' was Priscilla's parting injunction, as she took the reins, and shook them gently, by way of friendly incitement to Speckle.

'I shall just take a turn to the fields against the Stone-pits, Nancy, and look at the draining,' said Godfrey.

'You'll be in again by tea-time, dear?'

'Oh, yes, I shall be back in an hour.'

It was Godfrey's custom on a Sunday afternoon to do a little contemplative farming in a leisurely walk. Nancy seldom accompanied him; for the women of her generation—unless, like Priscilla, they took to outdoor management—were not given to much walking beyond their own house and garden, finding sufficient exercise in domestic duties. So, when Priscilla was not with her, she usually sat with Mant's Bible before her, and after following the text with her eyes for a little while, she would gradually permit them to wander as her thoughts had already insisted on wandering.

But Nancy's Sunday thoughts were rarely quite out of keeping with the devout and reverential intention implied by the book spread open before her. She was not theologically instructed enough to discern very clearly the relation between the sacred documents of the past which she opened without method, and her

own obscure, simple life ; but the spirit of rectitude, and the sense of responsibility for the effect of her conduct on others, which were strong elements in Nancy's character, had made it a habit with her to scrutinise her past feelings and actions with self-questioning solicitude. Her mind not being courted by a great variety of subjects, she filled the vacant moments by living inwardly, again and again, through all her remembered experience, especially through the fifteen years of her married time, in which her life and its significance had been doubled. (She recalled the small details, the words, tones, and looks, in the critical scenes which had opened a new epoch for her, by giving her a deeper insight into the relations and trials of life, or which had called on her for some little effort of forbearance, or of painful adherence to an imagined or real duty—asking herself continually whether she had been in any respect blameable.) This excessive rumination and self-questioning is perhaps a morbid habit inevitable to a mind of much moral sensibility when shut out from its due share of outward activity and of practical claims on its affections—in-avoidable to a noble-hearted, childless woman, when her lot is narrow. 'I can do so little—have I done it all well ?' is the perpetually recurring thought ; and there are no voices calling her away from that soliloquy, no peremptory demands to divert energy from vain regret or superfluous scruple.

There was one main thread of painful experience in Nancy's married life, and on it hung certain deeply-felt scenes, which were the oftenest revived in retrospect. The short dialogue with Priscilla in the garden had determined the current of retrospect in that frequent direction this particular Sunday afternoon. The first wandering of her thought from the text, which she still attempted dutifully to follow with her eyes and silent lips, was into an imaginary enlargement of the defence she had set up for her husband against Priscilla's implied blame. The vindication of the loved object is the best balm affection can find for its wounds :—'A man

must have so much on his mind,' is the belief by which a wife often supports a cheerful face under rough answers and unfeeling words. And Nancy's deepest wounds had all come from the perception that the absence of children from their hearth was dwelt on in her husband's mind as a privation to which he could not reconcile himself.

Yet sweet Nancy might have been expected to feel still more keenly the denial of a blessing to which she had looked forward with all the varied expectations and preparations, solemn and prettily trivial, which fill the mind of a loving woman when she expects to become a mother. Was there not a drawer filled with the neat work of her hands, all unworn and untouched, just as she had arranged it there fourteen years ago—just, but for one little dress, which had been made the burial-dress? But under this immediate personal trial Nancy was so firmly unmurmuring, that years ago she had suddenly renounced the habit of visiting this drawer, lest she should in this way be cherishing a longing for what was not given.

Perhaps it was this very severity towards any indulgence of what she held to be sinful regret in herself, that made her shrink from applying her own standard to her husband. 'It was very different—it was much worse for a man to be disappointed in that way: a woman could always be satisfied with devoting herself to her husband, but a man wanted something that would make him look forward more—and sitting by the fire was so much duller to him than to a woman.' And always, when Nancy reached this point in her meditations—trying, with predetermined sympathy, to see everything as Godfrey saw it—there came a renewal of self-questioning. *Had* she done everything in her power to lighten Godfrey's privation? *Had* she really been right in the resistance which had caused her so much pain six years ago, and again four years ago—the resistance to her husband's wish that they should adopt a child? Adoption was more remote from the ideas and habits of that time than of our own; still

Nancy had her opinion on it. It was as necessary to her mind to have an opinion on all topics, not exclusively masculine, that had come under her notice, as for her to have a precisely marked place for every article of her personal property: and her opinions were always principles, to be unwaveringly acted on. They were firm, not because of their basis, but because she held them with a tenacity inseparable from her mental action. On all the duties and proprieties of life, from filial behaviour to the arrangement of the evening toilette, pretty Nancy Lammeter, by the time she was three-and-twenty, had her unalterable little code, and had formed every one of her habits in strict accordance with that code. She carried these decided judgments within her in the most unobtrusive way: they rooted themselves in her mind, and grew there as quietly as grass. Years ago, we know, she insisted on dressing like Priscilla, because 'it was right for sisters to dress alike,' and because 'she would do what was right if she wore a gown dyed with cheese-colouring.' That was a trivial but typical instance of the mode in which Nancy's life was regulated.

It was one of those rigid principles, and no petty egoistic feeling, which had been the ground of Nancy's difficult resistance to her husband's wish. To adopt a child, because children of your own had been denied you, was to try and choose your lot in spite of Providence: the adopted child, she was convinced, would never turn out well, and would be a curse to those who had wilfully and rebelliously sought what it was clear that, for some high reason, they were better without. When you saw a thing was not meant to be, said Nancy, it was a bounden duty to leave off so much as wishing for it. And so far, perhaps, the wisest of men could scarcely make more than a verbal improvement in her principle. But the conditions under which she held it apparent that a thing was not meant to be, depended on a more peculiar mode of thinking. She would have given up making a purchase at a particular place if, on three successive times, rain, or some other cause of

Heaven's sending, had formed an obstacle; and she would have anticipated a broken limb or other heavy misfortune to any one who persisted in spite of such indications.

'But why should you think the child would turn out ill?' said Godfrey, in his remonstrances. 'She has thriven as well as child can do with the weaver; and he adopted her. There isn't such a pretty little girl anywhere else in the parish, or one fitter for the station we could give her. Where can be the likelihood of her being a curse to anybody?'

'Yes, my dear Godfrey,' said Nancy, who was sitting with her hands tightly clasped together, with yearning, regretful affection in her eyes. 'The child may not turn out ill with the weaver. But, then, he didn't go to seek her, as we should be doing. It will be wrong: I feel sure it will. Don't you remember what that lady we met at the Royston Baths told us about the child her sister adopted? That was the only adopting I ever heard of: and the child was transported when it was twenty-three. Dear Godfrey, don't ask me to do what I know is wrong: I should never be happy again. I know it's very hard for *you*—it's easier for me—but it's the will of Providence.'

It might seem singular that Nancy—with her religious theory pieced together out of narrow social traditions, fragments of church doctrine imperfectly understood, and girlish reasonings on her small experience—should have arrived by herself at a way of thinking so nearly akin to that of many devout people, whose beliefs are held in the shape of a system quite remote from her knowledge—singular, if we did not know that human beliefs, like all other natural growths, elude the barriers of system.

Godfrey had from the first specified Eppie, then about twelve years old, as a child suitable for them to adopt. It had never occurred to him that Silas would rather part with his life than with Eppie. Surely the weaver would wish the best to the child he had taken so much trouble with, and would be glad that such good fortune

should happen to her : she would always be very grateful to him, and he would be well provided for to the end of his life—provided for as the excellent part he had done by the child deserved. Was it not an appropriate thing for people in a higher station to take a charge off the hands of a man in a lower ? It seemed an eminently appropriate thing to Godfrey, for reasons that were known only to himself ; and by a common fallacy, he imagined the measure would be easy because he had private motives for desiring it. This was rather a coarse mode of estimating Silas's relation to Eppie ; but we must remember that many of the impressions which Godfrey was likely to gather concerning the labouring people around him would favour the idea that deep affections can hardly go along with callous palms and scant means ; and he had not had the opportunity, even if he had had the power, of entering intimately into all that was exceptional in the weaver's experience. It was only the want of adequate knowledge that could have made it possible for Godfrey deliberately to entertain an unfeeling project : his natural kindness had outlived that blighting time of cruel wishes, and Nancy's praise of him as a husband was not founded entirely on a wilful illusion.

'I was right,' she said to herself, when she had recalled all their scenes of discussion—'I feel I was right to say him nay, though it hurt me more than anything ; but how good Godfrey has been about it ! Many men would have been very angry with me for standing out against their wishes ; and they might have thrown out that they'd had ill-luck in marrying me ; but Godfrey has never been the man to say me an unkind word. It's only what he can't hide : everything seems so blank to him, I know ; and the land—what a difference it 'ud make to him, when he goes to see after things, if he'd children growing up that he was doing it all for ! But I won't murmur ; and perhaps if he'd married a woman who'd have had children, she'd have vexed him in other ways.'

This possibility was Nancy's chief comfort ; and to

give it greater strength, she laboured to make it impossible that any other wife should have had more perfect tenderness. She had been *forced* to vex him by that one denial. Godfrey was not insensible to her loving effort, and did Nancy no injustice as to the motives of her obstinacy. It was impossible to have lived with her fifteen years and not be aware that an unselfish clinging to the right, and a sincerity clear as the flower-born dew, were her main characteristics ; indeed, Godfrey felt this so strongly, that his own more wavering nature, too averse to facing difficulty to be unvaryingly simple and truthful, was kept in a certain awe of this gentle wife who watched his looks with a yearning to obey them. It seemed to him impossible that he should ever confess to her the truth about Eppie : she would never recover from the repulsion the story of his earlier marriage would create, told to her now, after that long concealment. And the child, too, he thought, must become an object of repulsion : the very sight of her would be painful. The shock to Nancy's mingled pride and ignorance of the world's evil might even be too much for her delicate frame. Since he had married her with that secret on his heart he must keep it there to the last. Whatever else he did, he could not make an irreparable breach between himself and this long-loved wife.

Meanwhile, why could he not make up his mind to the absence of children from a hearth brightened by such a wife ? Why did his mind fly uneasily to that void, as if it were the sole reason why life was not thoroughly joyous to him ? I suppose it is the way with all men and women who reach middle age without the clear perception that life never *can* be thoroughly joyous : under the vague dulness of the grey hours, dissatisfaction seeks a definite object, and finds it in the privation of an untried good. Dissatisfaction, seated musingly on a childless hearth, thinks with envy of the father whose return is greeted by young voices—seated at the meal where the little heads rise one above another like nursery plants, it sees a black care hovering



behind every one of them, and thinks the impulses by which men abandon freedom, and seek for ties, are surely nothing but a brief madness. In Godfrey's case there were further reasons why his thoughts should be continually solicited by this one point in his lot: his conscience, never thoroughly easy about Eppie, now gave his childless home the aspect of a retribution; and as the time passed on, under Nancy's refusal to adopt her, any retrieval of his error became more and more difficult.

On this Sunday afternoon it was already four years since there had been any allusion to the subject between them, and Nancy supposed that it was for ever buried.

'I wonder if he'll mind it less or more as he gets older,' she thought; 'I'm afraid more. Aged people feel the miss of children: what would father do without Priscilla? And if I die, Godfrey will be very lonely—not holding together with his brothers much. But I won't be over-anxious, and trying to make things out beforehand: I must do my best for the present.'

With that last thought Nancy roused herself from her reverie, and turned her eyes again towards the forsaken page. It had been forsaken longer than she imagined, for she was presently surprised by the appearance of the servant with the tea-things. It was, in fact, a little before the usual time for tea; but Jane had her reasons.

'Is your master come into the yard, Jane?'

'No 'm, he isn't,' said Jane, with a slight emphasis, of which, however, her mistress took no notice.

'I don't know whether you've seen 'em, 'm,' continued Jane, after a pause, 'but there's folks making haste all one way, afore the front window. I doubt something's happened. There's niver a man to be seen i' the yard, else I'd send and see. I've been up into the top attic, but there's no seeing anything for trees. I hope nobody's hurt, that's all.'

'Oh, no, I daresay there's nothing much the matter,' said Nancy. 'It's perhaps Mr. Snell's bull got out again, as he did before.'

'I wish he mayn't gore anybody, then, that's all,' said Jane, not altogether despising a hypothesis which covered a few imaginary calamities.

'That girl is always terrifying me,' thought Nancy; 'I wish Godfrey would come in.'

She went to the front window and looked as far as she could see along the road, with an uneasiness which she felt to be childish, for there were now no such signs of excitement as Jane had spoken of, and Godfrey would not be likely to return by the village road, but by the fields. She continued to stand, however, looking at the placid churchyard with the long shadows of the grave-stones across the bright green hillocks, and at the glowing autumn colours of the Rectory trees beyond. Before such calm external beauty the presence of a vague fear is more distinctly felt—like a raven flapping its slow wing across the sunny air. Nancy wished more and more that Godfrey would come in.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME one opened the door at the other end of the room, and Nancy felt that it was her husband. She turned from the window with gladness in her eyes, for the wife's chief dread was stilled.

'Dear, I'm so thankful you're come,' she said, going towards him. 'I began to get——'

She paused abruptly, for Godfrey was laying down his hat with trembling hands, and turned towards her with a pale face and a strange unanswering glance, as if he saw her indeed, but saw her as part of a scene invisible to herself. She laid her hand on his arm, not daring to speak again; but he left the touch unnoticed, and threw himself into his chair.

Jane was already at the door with the hissing urn. 'Tell her to keep away, will you?', said Godfrey; and when the door was closed again he exerted himself to speak more distinctly.

'Sit down, Nancy—there,' he said, pointing to a chair

opposite him. 'I came back as soon as I could, to hinder anybody's telling you but me. I've had a great shock—but I care most about the shock it'll be to you.'

'It isn't father and Priscilla?' said Nancy, with quivering lips, clasping her hands together tightly on her lap.

'No, it's nobody living,' said Godfrey, unequal to the considerate skill with which he would have wished to make his revelation. 'It's Dunstan—my brother Dunstan, that we lost sight of sixteen years ago. We've found him—found his body—his skeleton.'

The deep dread Godfrey's look had created in Nancy made her feel these words a relief. She sat in comparative calmness to hear what else he had to tell. He went on:

'The Stone-pit has gone dry suddenly—from the draining, I suppose; and there he lies—has lain for sixteen years, wedged between two great stones. There's his watch and seals, and there's my gold-handled hunting whip, with my name on: he took it away, without my knowing, the day he went hunting on Wildfire, the last time he was seen.'

Godfrey paused: it was not so easy to say what came next. 'Do you think he drowned himself?' said Nancy, almost wondering that her husband should be so deeply shaken by what had happened all those years ago to an unloved brother, of whom worse things had been augured.

'No, he fell in,' said Godfrey, in a low but distinct voice, as if he felt some deep meaning in the fact. Presently he added: 'Dunstan was the man that robbed Silas Marner.'

The blood rushed to Nancy's face and neck at this surprise and shame, for she had been bred up to regard even a distant kinship with crime as a dishonour.

'Oh, Godfrey!' she said, with compassion in her tone, for she had immediately reflected that the dishonour must be felt still more keenly by her husband.

'There was the money in the pit,' he continued—'all the weaver's money. Everything's being gathered

up, and they're taking the skeleton to the Rainbow. But I came back to tell you : there was no hindering it ; you must know.'

He was silent, looking on the ground for two long minutes. Nancy would have said some words of comfort under this disgrace, but she refrained, from an instinctive sense that there was something behind—that Godfrey had something else to tell her. Presently he lifted his eyes to her face, and kept them fixed on her, as he said—

'Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God Almighty wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a secret on my mind, but I'll keep it from you no longer. I wouldn't have you know it by somebody else, and not by me—I wouldn't have you find it out after I'm dead. I'll tell you now. It's been "I will" and "I won't" with me all my life—I'll make sure of myself now.'

Nancy's utmost dread had returned. The eyes of the husband and wife met with awe in them, as at a crisis which suspended affection.

'Nancy,' said Godfrey, slowly, 'when I married you, I hid something from you—something I ought to have told you. That woman Marnier found dead in the snow—Eppie's mother—that wretched woman—was my wife : Eppie is my child.'

He paused, dreading the effect of his confession. But Nancy sat quite still, only that her eyes dropped and ceased to meet his. She was pale and quiet as a meditative statue, clasping her hands on her lap.

'You'll never think the same of me again,' said Godfrey, after a little while, with some tremor in his voice.

She was silent.

'I oughtn't to have left the child unowned : I oughtn't to have kept it from you. But I couldn't bear to give you up, Nancy. I was led away into marrying her—I suffered for it.'

Still Nancy was silent, looking down ; and he almost expected that she would presently get up and say she would go to her father's. How could she have any

mercy for faults that must seem so black to her, with her simple, severe notions ?

But at last she lifted up her eyes to his again and spoke. There was no indignation in her voice—only deep regret.

‘Godfrey, if you had but told me this six years ago, we could have done some of our duty by the child. Do you think I’d have refused to take her in, if I’d known she was yours ?’

At that moment Godfrey felt all the bitterness of an error that was not simply futile, but had defeated its own end. He had not measured this wife with whom he had lived so long. But she spoke again, with more agitation.

‘And—Oh, Godfrey—if we’d had her from the first, if you’d taken to her as you ought, she’d have loved me for her mother—and you’d have been happier with me : I could better have bore my little baby dying, and our life might have been more like what we used to think it ’ud be.’

The tears fell, and Nancy ceased to speak.

‘But you wouldn’t have married me then, Nancy, if I’d told you,’ said Godfrey, urged, in the bitterness of his self-reproach, to prove to himself that his conduct had not been utter folly. ‘You may think you would now, but you wouldn’t then. With your pride and your father’s, you’d have hated having anything to do with me after the talk there ’d have been.’

‘I can’t say what I should have done about that, Godfrey. I should never have married anybody else. But I wasn’t worth doing wrong for—nothing is in this world. Nothing is so good as it seems beforehand—not even our marrying wasn’t, you see.’ There was a faint sad smile on Nancy’s face as she said the last words.

‘I’m a worse man than you thought I was, Nancy,’ said Godfrey, rather tremulously. ‘Can you forgive me ever ?’

‘The wrong to me is but little, Godfrey : you’ve made it up to me—you’ve been good to me for fifteen years. It’s another you did the wrong to ; and I doubt it can never be all made up for.’

'But we can take Eppie now,' said Godfrey. 'I won't mind the world knowing at last. I'll be plain and open for the rest o' my life.'

'It'll be different coming to us, now she's grown up,' said Nancy, shaking her head sadly. 'But it's your duty to acknowledge her and provide for her; and I'll do my part by her, and pray to God Almighty to make her love me.'

'Then we'll go together to Silas Marner's this very night, as soon as everything's quiet at the Stone-pits.'

## CHAPTER XIX.

BETWEEN eight and nine o'clock that evening, Eppie and Silas were seated alone in the cottage. After the great excitement the weaver had undergone from the events of the afternoon, he had felt a longing for this quietude, and had even begged Mrs. Winthrop and Aaron, who had naturally lingered behind every one else, to leave him alone with his child. The excitement had not passed away: it had only reached that stage when the keenness of the susceptibility makes external stimulus intolerable—when there is no sense of weariness, but rather an intensity of inward life, under which sleep is an impossibility. Any one who has watched such moments in other men remembers the brightness of the eyes and the strange definiteness that comes over coarse features from that transient influence. It is as if a new fineness of ear for all spiritual voices had sent wonder-working vibrations through the heavy mortal frame—as if 'beauty born of murmuring sound' had passed into the face of the listener.

Silas's face showed that sort of transfiguration, as he sat in his arm-chair and looked at Eppie. She had drawn her own chair towards his knees, and leaned forward, holding both his hands, while she looked up at him. On the table near them, lit by a candle, lay the

recovered gold—the old long-loved gold, ranged in orderly heaps, as Silas used to range it in the days when it was his only joy. He had been telling her how he used to count it every night, and how his soul was utterly desolate till she was sent to him.

‘At first, I’d a sort o’ feeling come across me now and then,’ he was saying in a subdued tone, ‘as if you might be changed into the gold again; for sometimes, turn my head which way I would, I seemed to see the gold; and I thought I should be glad if I could feel it, and find it was come back. But that didn’t last long. After a bit, I should have thought it was a curse come again, if it had drove you from me, for I’d got to feel the need o’ your looks and your voice and the touch o’ your little fingers. You didn’t know then, Eppie, when you were such a little un—you didn’t know what your old father Silas felt for you.’

‘But I know now, father,’ said Eppie. ‘If it hadn’t been for you, they’d have taken me to the workhouse, and there ’d have been nobody to love me.’

‘Eh, my precious child, the blessing was mine. If you hadn’t been sent to save me, I should ha’ gone to the grave in my misery. The money was taken away from me in time; and you see it’s been kept—kept till it was wanted for you. It’s wonderful—our life is wonderful.’

Silas sat in silence a few minutes, looking at the money. ‘It takes no hold of me now,’ he said, ponderingly—‘the money doesn’t. I wonder if it ever could again—I doubt it might, if I lost you, Eppie. I might come to think I was forsaken again, and lose the feeling that God was good to me.’

At that moment there was a knocking at the door; and Eppie was obliged to rise without answering Silas. Beautiful she looked, with the tenderness of gathering tears in her eyes and a slight flush on her cheeks, as she stepped to open the door. The flush deepened when she saw Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass. She made her little rustic curtsy, and held the door wide for them to enter.

'We're disturbing you very late, my dear,' said Mrs. Cass, taking Eppie's hand, and looking in her face with an expression of anxious interest and admiration. Nancy herself was pale and tremulous. Eppie, after placing chairs for Mr. and Mrs. Cass, went to stand against Silas, opposite to them.

'Well, Marner,' said Godfrey, trying to speak with perfect firmness, 'it's a great comfort to me to see you with your money again, that you've been deprived of so many years. It was one of my family did you the wrong—the more grief to me—and I feel bound to make up to you for it in every way. Whatever I can do for you will be nothing but paying a debt, even if I looked no farther than the robbery. But there are other things I'm beholden—shall be beholden to you for, Marner.'

Godfrey checked himself. It had been agreed between him and his wife that the subject of his fatherhood should be approached very carefully, and that, if possible, the disclosure should be reserved for the future, so that it might be made to Eppie gradually. Nancy had urged this, because she felt strongly the painful light in which Eppie must inevitably see the relation between her father and mother.

Silas, always ill at ease when he was being spoken to by 'betters,' such as Mr. Cass—tall, powerful, florid men, seen chiefly on horseback—answered with some constraint,—

'Sir, I've a deal to thank you for a'ready. As for the robbery, I count it no loss to me. And if I did, you couldn't help it: you aren't answerable for it.'

'You may look at it in that way, Marner, but I never can; and I hope you'll let me act according to my own feeling of what's just. I know you're easily contented: you've been a hard-working man all your life.'

'Yes, sir, yes,' said Marner, meditatively. 'I should ha' been bad off without my work: it was what I held by when everything else was gone from me.'

'Ah,' said Godfrey, applying Marner's words simply to his bodily wants, 'it was a good trade for you in this



country, because there's been a great deal of linen-weaving to be done. But you're getting rather past such close work, Marner: it's time you laid by and had some rest. You look a good deal pulled down, though you're not an old man, *are you?*'

'Fifty-five, as near as I can say, sir,' said Silas.

'Oh, why, you may live thirty years longer—look at old Macey! And that money on the table, after all, is but little. It won't go far either way—whether it's put out to interest, or you were to live on it as long as it would last: it wouldn't go far if you'd nobody to keep but yourself, and you've had two to keep for a good many years now.'

'Eh, sir,' said Silas, unaffected by anything Godfrey was saying, 'I'm in no fear o' want. We shall do very well—Eppie and me 'ull do well enough. There's few working-folks have got so much laid by as that. I don't know what it is to gentlefolks, but I look upon it as a deal—almost too much. And as for us, it's little we want.'

'Only the garden, father,' said Eppie, blushing up to the ears the moment after.

'You love a garden, do you, my dear?' said Nancy, thinking that this turn in the point of view might help her husband. 'We should agree in that: I give a deal of time to the garden.'

'Ah, there's plenty of gardening at the Red House,' said Godfrey, surprised at the difficulty he found in approaching a proposition which had seemed so easy to him in the distance. 'You've done a good part by Eppie, Marner, for sixteen years. It 'ud be a great comfort to you to see her well provided for, wouldn't it? She looks blooming and healthy, but not fit for any hardships: she doesn't look like a strapping girl come of working parents. You'd like to see her taken care of by those who can leave her well off, and make a lady of her; she's more fit for it than for a rough life, such as she might come to have in a few years' time.'

A slight flush came over Marner's face, and disap-

peared, like a passing gleam. Eppie was simply wondering Mr. Cass should talk so about things that seemed to have nothing to do with reality; but Silas was hurt and uneasy.

'I don't take your meaning, sir,' he answered, not having words at command to express the mingled feelings with which he had heard Mr. Cass's words.

'Well, my meaning is this, Marner,' said Godfrey, determined to come to the point. 'Mrs. Cass and I, you know, have no children—nobody to benefit by our good home and everything else we have—more than enough for ourselves. And we should like to have somebody in the place of a daughter to us—we should like to have Eppie, and treat her in every way as our own child. It would be a great comfort to you in your old age, I hope, to see her fortune made in that way, after you have been at the trouble of bringing her up so well. And it's right you should have every reward for that. And Eppie, I'm sure, will always love you and be grateful to you: she'd come and see you very often, and we should all be on the look-out to do everything as we could towards making you comfortable.'

A plain man like Godfrey Cass, speaking under some embarrassment, necessarily blunders on words that are coarser than his intentions, and that are likely to fall gratingly on susceptible feelings. While he had been speaking, Eppie had quietly passed her arm behind Silas's head, and let her hand rest against it caressingly: she felt him trembling violently. He was silent for some moments when Mr. Cass had ended—powerless under the conflict of emotions, all alike painful. Eppie's heart was swelling at the sense that her father was in distress; and she was just going to lean down and speak to him, when one struggling dread at last gained the mastery over every other in Silas, and he said, faintly—

'Eppie, my child, speak. I won't stand in your way. Thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass.'

Eppie took her hand from her father's head, and came forward a step. Her cheeks were flushed, but not with shyness this time: the sense that her father was

in doubt and suffering banished that sort of self-consciousness. She dropped a low curtsy, first to Mrs. Cass and then to Mr. Cass, and said—

‘Thank you, ma’am—thank you, sir. But I can’t leave my father, nor own any body nearer than him. And I don’t want to be a lady—thank you all the same’ (here Eppie dropped another curtsy). ‘I couldn’t give up the folks I’ve been used to.’

Eppie’s lip began to tremble a little at the last words. She retreated to her father’s chair again, and held him round the neck ; while Silas, with a subdued sob, put up his hand to grasp hers.

The tears were in Nancy’s eyes, but her sympathy with Eppie was, naturally, divided with distress on her husband’s account. She dared not speak, wondering what was going on in her husband’s mind.

Godfrey felt an irritation inevitable to almost all of us when we encounter an unexpected obstacle. He had been full of his own penitence and resolution to retrieve his error as far as the time was left to him ; he was possessed with all-important feelings, that were to lead to a predetermined course of action which he had fixed on as the right, and he was not prepared to enter with lively appreciation into other people’s feelings counteracting his virtuous resolves. The agitation with which he spoke again was not quite unmixed with anger.

‘But I have a claim on you Eppie—the strongest of all claims. It is my duty, Marner, to own Eppie as my child, and provide for her. She is my own child—her mother was my wife. I have a natural claim on her that must stand before every other’

Eppie had given a violent start, and turned quite pale. Silas, on the contrary, who had been relieved, by Eppie’s answer, from the dread lest his mind should be in opposition to hers, felt the spirit of resistance in him set free, not without a touch of parental fierceness. ‘Then, sir,’ he answered, with an accent of bitterness that had been silent in him since the memorable day when his youthful hope had perished—‘then, sir, why

didn't you say so sixteen years ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body? God gave her to me because you turned your back upon her, and He looks upon her as mine: you've no right to her! When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in.'

'I know that, Marner. I was wrong. I've repented of my conduct in that matter,' said Godfrey, who could not help feeling the edge of Silas's words.

'I'm glad to hear it, sir,' said Marner, with gathering excitement; 'but repentance doesn't alter what's been going on for sixteen year. Your coming now and saying "I'm her father" doesn't alter the feelings inside us. It's me she's been calling her father ever since she could say the word.'

'But I think you might look at the thing more reasonably, Marner,' said Godfrey, unexpectedly awed by the weaver's direct truth-speaking. 'It isn't as if she was to be taken quite away from you, so that you'd never see her again. She'll be very near you, and come to see you very often. She'll feel just the same towards you.'

'Just the same?' said Marner, more bitterly than ever. 'How'll she feel just the same for me as she does now, when we eat o' the same bit, and drink o' the same cup, and think o' the same things from one day's end to another? Just the same? that's idle talk. You'd cut us i' two.'

Godfrey, unqualified by experience to discern the pregnancy of Marner's simple words, felt rather angry again. It seemed to him that the weaver was very selfish (a judgment readily passed by those who have never tested their own power of sacrifice) to oppose what was undoubtedly for Eppie's welfare; and he felt himself called upon, for her sake, to assert his authority.

'I should have thought, Marner,' he said, severely—'I should have thought your affection for Eppie would have made you rejoice in what was for her good, even if it did call upon you to give up something. You ought

to remember that your own life is uncertain, and that she's at an age now when her lot may soon be fixed in a way very different from what it would be in her father's home : she may marry some low working-man, and then, whatever I might do for her, I couldn't make her well-off. You're putting yourself in the way of her welfare ; and though I'm sorry to hurt you after what you've done, and what I've left undone, I feel now it's my duty to insist on taking care of my own daughter. I want to do my duty.'

It would be difficult to say whether it were Silas or Eppie that was most deeply stirred by this last speech of Godfrey's. Thought had been very busy in Eppie as she listened to the contest between her old long-loved father and this new unfamiliar father who had suddenly come to fill the place of that black featureless shadow which had held the ring and placed it on her mother's finger. Her imagination had darted backward in conjectures, and forward in provisions, of what this revealed fatherhood implied ; and there were words in Godfrey's last speech which helped to make the provisions especially definite. Not that these thoughts, either of past or future, determined her resolution—that was determined by the feelings which vibrated to every word Silas had uttered ; but they raised, even apart from these feelings, a repulsion towards the offered lot and the newly-revealed father.

Silas, on the other hand, was again stricken in conscience, and alarmed lest Godfrey's accusation should be true—lest he should be raising his own will as an obstacle to Eppie's good. For many moments he was mute, struggling for the self-conquest necessary to the uttering of the difficult words. They came out tremulously.

'I'll say no more. Let it be as you will. Speak to the child. I'll hinder nothing.'

Even Nancy, with all the acute sensibility of her own affections, shared her husband's view, that Marner was not justifiable in his wish to retain Eppie, after her real father had avowed himself. She felt that it was a very

hard trial for the poor weaver, but her code allowed no question that a father by blood must have a claim above that of any foster-father. Besides, Nancy, used all her life to plenteous circumstances and the privileges of 'respectability,' could not enter into the pleasures which early nurture and habit connect with all the little aims and efforts of the poor who are born poor : to her mind, Eppie, in being restored to her birthright, was entering on a too long withheld but unquestionable good. Hence she heard Silas's last words with relief, and thought, as Godfrey did, that their wish was achieved.

'Eppie, my dear,' said Godfrey, looking at his daughter, not without some embarrassment, under the sense that she was old enough to judge him, 'it'll always be our wish that you should show your love and gratitude to one who's been a father to you so many years, and we shall want to help you to make him comfortable in every way. But we hope you'll come to love us as well ; and though I haven't been what a father should have been to you all these years, I wish to do the utmost in my power for you for the rest of my life, and provide for you as my only child. And you'll have the best of mothers in my wife—that'll be a blessing you haven't known since you were old enough to know it.'

'My dear, you'll be a treasure to me,' said Nancy, in her gentle voice. 'We shall want for nothing when we have our daughter.'

Eppie did not come forward and curtsy, as she had done before. She held Silas's hand in hers, and grasped it firmly—it was a weaver's hand, with a palm and finger-tips that were sensitive to such pressure—while she spoke with colder decision than before.

'Thank you, ma'am—thank you, sir, for your offers—they're very great, and far above my wish. For I should have no delight in life any more if I was forced to go away from my father, and knew he was sitting at home, a-thinking of me and feeling lone. We've been used to be happy together every day, and I can't think o' no happiness without him. And he says he'd no-

body i' the world till I was sent to him, and he'd have nothing when I was gone. And he's took care of me and loved me from the first, and I'll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever come between him and me.'

'But you must make sure, Eppie,' said Silas, in a low voice—'you must make sure as you won't ever be sorry, because you've made your choice to stay among poor folks, and with poor clothes and things, when you might ha' had everything o' the best.'

His sensitiveness on this point had increased as he listened to Eppie's words of faithful affection.

'I can never be sorry, father,' said Eppie. 'I shouldn't know what to think on or to wish for with fine things about me, as I haven't been used to. And it 'ud be poor work for me to put on things, and ride in a gig, and sit in a place at church, as 'ud make them as I'm fond of think me unfitting company for 'em. What could I care for then?'

Nancy looked at Godfrey with a pained questioning glance. But his eyes were fixed on the floor, where he was moving the end of his stick, as if he were pondering on something absently. She thought there was a word which might perhaps come better from her lips than from his.

'What you say is natural, my dear child—it's natural 'you should cling to those who've brought you up,' she said, mildly; 'but there's a duty you owe to your lawful father. There's perhaps something to be given up on more sides than one. When your father opens his home to you, I think it's right you shouldn't turn your back on it.'

'I can't feel as I've got any father but one,' said Eppie, impetuously, while the tears gathered. 'I've always thought of a little home where he'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him: I can't think o' no other home. I wasn't brought up to be a lady, and I can't turn my mind to it. I like the working folks, and their houses, and their ways. And,' she ended passionately, while the tears fell, 'I'm

promised to marry a working man, as 'll live with father, and help me to take care of him.'

Godfrey looked up at Nancy with a flushed face and a smarting dilation of the eyes. This frustration of a purpose towards which he had set out under the exalted consciousness that he was about to compensate in some degree for the greatest demerit of his life, made him feel the air of the room stifling.

'Let us go,' he said, in an undertone.

'We won't talk of this any longer now,' said Nancy, rising. 'We're your well-wishers, my dear—and yours too, Marner. We shall come and see you again. It's getting late now.'

In this way she covered her husband's abrupt departure, for Godfrey had gone straight to the door, unable to say more.

## CHAPTER XX.

NANCY and Godfrey walked home under the starlight in silence. When they entered the oaken parlour, Godfrey threw himself into his chair, while Nancy laid down her bonnet and shawl, and stood on the hearth near her husband, unwilling to leave him even for a few minutes, and yet fearing to utter any word lest it might jar on his feeling. At last Godfrey turned his head towards her, and their eyes met, dwelling in that meeting without any movement on either side. That quiet mutual gaze of a trusting husband and wife is like the first moment of rest or refuge from a great weariness or a great danger—not to be interfered with by speech or action which would distract the sensations from the fresh enjoyment of repose.

But presently he put out his hand, and as Nancy placed hers within it, he drew her towards him, and said—

'That's ended!'



She bent to kiss him, and then said, as she stood by his side, 'Yes, I'm afraid we must give up the hope of having her for a daughter. It wouldn't be right to want to force her to come to us against her will. We can't alter her bringing up and what's come of it.'

'No,' said Godfrey, with a keen decisiveness of tone, in contrast with his usually careless and unemphatic speech—'there's debts we can't pay like money debts, by paying extra for the years that have slipped by. While I've been putting off, and putting off, the trees have been growing—it's too late now. Marner was in the right in what he said about a man's turning away a blessing from his door: it falls to somebody else. I wanted to pass for childless once, Nancy—I shall pass for childless now against my wish.'

Nancy did not speak immediately, but after a little while she asked—'You won't make it known, then, about Eppie's being your daughter?'

'No—where would be the good to anybody?—only harm. I must do what I can for her in the state of life she chooses. I must see who it is she's thinking of marrying.'

'If it won't do any good to make the thing known,' said Nancy, who thought she might now allow herself the relief of entertaining a feeling which she had tried to silence before, 'I should be very thankful for father and Priscilla never to be troubled with knowing what was done in the past, more than about Dunsey: it can't be helped, their knowing that.'

'I shall put it in my will—I think I shall put it in my will. I shouldn't like to leave anything to be found out, like this of Dunsey,' said Godfrey, meditatively. 'But I can't see anything but difficulties that 'ud come from telling it now. I must do what I can to make her happy in her own way. I've a notion,' he added after a moment's pause, 'it's Aaron Winthrop she meant she was engaged to. I remember seeing him with her and Marner going away from church.'

'Well, he's very sober and industrious,' said Nancy, trying to view the matter as cheerfully as possible.

Godfrey fell into thoughtfulness again. Presently he looked up at Nancy sorrowfully, and said—

‘She’s a very pretty, nice girl, isn’t she, Nancy?’

‘Yes, dear; and with just your hair and eyes: I wondered it had never struck me before.’

‘I think she took a dislike to me at the thought of my being her father: I could see a change in her manner after that.’

‘She couldn’t bear to think of not looking on Marner as her father,’ said Nancy, not wishing to confirm her husband’s painful impression.

‘She thinks I did wrong by her mother as well as by her. She thinks me worse than I am. But she *must* think it: she can never know all. It’s part of my punishment, Nancy, for my daughter to dislike me. I should never have got into that trouble if I’d been true to you—if I hadn’t been a fool. I’d no right to expect anything but evil could come of that marriage—and when I shirked doing a father’s part too.’

Nancy was silent: her spirit of rectitude would not let her try to soften the edge of what she felt to be a just compunction. He spoke again after a little while, but the tone was rather changed: there was tenderness mingled with the previous self-reproach.

‘And I got *you*, Nancy, in spite of all; and yet I’ve been grumbling and uneasy because I hadn’t something else—as if I deserved it.’

‘You’ve never been wanting to me, Godfrey,’ said Nancy, with quiet sincerity. ‘My only trouble would be gone if you resigned yourself to the lot that’s been given us.’

‘Well, perhaps, it isn’t too late to mend a bit there. Though it is too late to mend some things, say what they will.’

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE next morning, when Silas and Eppie were seated at their breakfast, he said to her,—

‘Eppie, there’s a thing I’ve had on my mind to do this two year, and now the money’s been brought back to us, we can do it. I’ve been turning it over and over in the night, and I think we’ll set out to-morrow, while the fine days last. We’ll leave the house and everything for your godmother to take care on, and we’ll make a little bundle o’ things and set out.’

‘Where to go, daddy?’ said Eppie, in much surprise.

‘To my old country—to the town where I was born—up Lantern Yard. I want to see Mr. Paston, the minister: something may ha’ come out to make ’em know I was innocent o’ the robbery. And Mr. Paston was a man with a deal o’ light—I want to speak to him about the drawing o’ the lots. And I should like to talk to him about the religion o’ this country-side, for I partly think he doesn’t know on it.’

Eppie was very joyful, for there was the prospect not only of wonder and delight at seeing a strange country, but also of coming back to tell Aaron all about it. Aaron was so much wiser than she was about most things—it would be rather pleasant to have this little advantage over him. Mrs. Winthrop, though possessed with a dim fear of dangers attendant on so long a journey, and requiring many assurances that it would not take them out of the region of carrier’s carts and slow waggons, was nevertheless well pleased that Silas should revisit his own country, and find out if he had been cleared from that false accusation.

‘You’d be easier in your mind for the rest o’ your life, Master Marner,’ said Dolly—‘that you would. And if there’s any light to be got up the yard as you talk on, we’ve need of it i’ this world, and I’d be glad on it myself, if you could bring it back.’

So, on the fourth day from that time, Silas and Eppie, in their Sunday clothes, with a small bundle tied in a blue linen handkerchief, were making their way through the streets of a great manufacturing town. Silas, bewildered by the changes thirty years had brought over his native place, had stopped several persons in succession to ask them the name of this town, that he might be sure he was not under a mistake about it.

'Ask for Lantern Yard, father—ask this gentleman with the tassels on his shoulders a-standing at the shop-door; he isn't in a hurry like the rest,' said Eppie, in some distress at her father's bewilderment, and ill at ease, besides, amidst the noise, the movement, and the multitude of strange indifferent faces.

'Eh, my child, he won't know anything about it,' said Silas; 'gentlefolks didn't ever go up the Yard. But happen somebody can tell me which is the way to Prison Street, where the jail is. I know the way out o' that as if I'd seen it yesterday.'

With some difficulty, after many turnings and new inquiries, they reached Prison Street; and the grim walls of the jail, the first object that answered to any image in Silas's memory, cheered him with the certitude, which no assurance of the town's name had hitherto given him, that he was in his native place.

'Ah,' he said, drawing a long breath, 'there's the jail, Eppie; that's just the same: I arn't afraid now. It's the third turning on the left hand from the jail doors, that's the way we must go.'

'Oh, what a dark ugly place!' said Eppie. 'How it hides the sky! It's worse than the Workhouse. I'm glad you don't live in this town now, father. Is Lantern Yard like this street?'

'My precious child,' said Silas, smiling, 'it isn't a big street like this. I never was easy i' this street myself, but I was fond o' Lantern Yard. The shops here are all altered, I think—I can't make 'em out; but I shall know the turning, because it's the third.'

'Here it is,' he said, in a tone of satisfaction, as they came to a narrow alley. 'And then we must go to the

left again, and then straight for'ard for a bit, up Shoe Lane; and then we shall be at the entry next to the o'erhanging window, where there's the nick in the road for the water to run. Eh, I can see it all.'

'Oh, father, I'm like as if I was stifled,' said Eppie. 'I couldn't have thought as any folks lived i' this way, so close together. How pretty the Stone-pits 'ull look when we get back!'

'It looks comical to me, child, now—and smells bad. I can't think as it usened to smell so.'

Here and there a sallow, begrimed face looked out from a gloomy doorway at the strangers, and increased Eppie's uneasiness, so that it was a longed-for relief when they issued from the alleys into Shoe Lane, where there was a broader strip of sky.

'Dear heart!' said Silas, 'why, there's people coming out o' the Yard as if they'd been to chapel at this time o' day—a weekday noon!'

Suddenly he started and stood still with a look of distressed amazement, that alarmed Eppie. They were before an opening in front of a large factory, from which men and women were streaming for their mid-day meal.

'Father,' said Eppie, clasping his arm, 'what's the matter?'

But she had to speak again and again before Silas could answer her.

'It's gone, child,' he said, at last, in strong agitation—'Lantern Yard's gone. It must ha' been here, because here's the house with the o'erhanging window—I know that—it's just the same; but they've made this new opening; and see that big factory! It's all gone—chapel and all.'

'Come into that little brush-shop and sit down, father—they'll let you sit down,' said Eppie, always on the watch lest one of her father's strange attacks should come on. 'Perhaps the people can tell you all about it.'

But neither from the brush-maker, who had come to Shoe Lane only ten years ago, when the factory was already built, nor from any other source within his

reach, could Silas learn anything of the old Lantern Yard friends, or of Mr. Paston, the minister.

'The old place is all swep' away,' Silas said to Dolly Winthrop on the night of his return—'the little graveyard and everything. The old home's gone; I've no home but this now. I shall never know whether they got at the truth o' the robbery, nor whether Mr. Paston could ha' given me any light about the drawing o' the lots. It's dark to me, Mrs. Winthrop, that is; I doubt it'll be dark to the last.'

'Well, yes, Master Marner,' said Dolly, who sat with a placid listening face, now bordered by grey hairs; 'I doubt it may. It's the will o' Them above as a many things should be dark to us; but there's some things as I've never felt i' the dark about, and they're mostly what comes i' the day's work. You were hard done by that once. Master Marner, and it seems as you'll never know the rights of it; but that doesn't hinder there *being* a rights. Master Marner, for all it's dark to you and me.'

'No,' said Silas, 'no; that doesn't hinder. Since the time the child was sent to me and I've come to love her as myself, I've had light enough to trusten by; and, now she says she'll never leave me, I think I shall trusten till I die.'

## CONCLUSION.

THERE was one time of the year which was held in Raveloe to be especially suitable for a wedding. It was when the great lilacs and laburnums in the old-fashioned gardens showed their golden and purple wealth above the lichen-tinted walls, and when there were calves still young enough to want bucketfuls of fragrant milk. People were not so busy then as they must become when the full cheese-making and the mowing had set in; and besides, it was a time when

a light bridal dress could be worn with comfort and seen to advantage.

Happily the sunshine fell more warmly than usual on the lilac tufts the morning that Eppie was married, for her dress was a very light one. She had often thought, though with a feeling of renunciation, that the perfection of a wedding-dress would be a white cotton, with the tiniest pink sprig at wide intervals; so that when Mrs. Godfrey Cass begged to provide one, and asked Eppie to choose what it should be, previous meditation had enabled her to give a decided answer at once.

Seen at a little distance as she walked across the churchyard and down the village, she seemed to be attired in pure white, and her hair looked like the dash of gold on a lily. One hand was on her husband's arm, and with the other she clasped the hand of her father Silas.

'You won't be giving me away, father,' she had said before they went to church; 'you'll only be taking Aaron to be a son to you.'

Dolly Winthrop walked behind with her husband; and there ended the little bridal procession.

There were many eyes to look at it, and Miss Priscilla Lammeter was glad that she and her father had happened to drive up to the door of the Red House just in time to see this pretty sight. They had come to keep Nancy company to-day, because Mr. Cass had had to go away to Lytherly, for special reasons. That seemed to be a pity, for otherwise he might have gone, as Mr. Crackenthorp and Mr. Osgood certainly would, to look on at the wedding-feast which he had ordered at the Rainbow, naturally feeling a great interest in the weaver who had been wronged by one of his own family.

'I could ha' wished Nancy had had the luck to find a child like that and bring her up,' said Priscilla to her father, as they sat in the gig; 'I should ha' had something young to think of then, besides the lambs and the calves.'

'Yes, my dear, yes,' said Mr. Lammeter; 'one feels

that as one gets older. Things look dim to old folks : they'd need have some young eyes about 'em, to let 'em know the world's the same as it used to be.'

Nancy came out now to welcome her father and sister ; and the wedding group had passed on beyond the Red House to the humbler part of the village.

Dolly Winthrop was the first to divine that old Mr Macey, who had been set in his arm-chair outside his own door, would expect some special notice as they passed, since he was too old to be at the wedding-feast.

'Mr. Macey's looking for a word from us,' said Dolly ; 'he'll be hurt if we pass him and say nothing—and him so racked with rheumatiz.'

So they turned aside to shake hands with the old man. He had looked forward to the occasion, and had his premeditated speech.

'Well, Master Marner,' he said, in a voice that quavered a good deal, 'I've lived to see my words come true. I was the first to say there was no harm in you, though your looks might be again' you ; and I was the first to say you'd get your money back. And it's nothing but rightful as you should. And I'd ha' said the "Amens," and willing, at the holy matrimony ; but Tookey's done it a good while now, and I hope you'll have none the worse luck.'

In the open yard before the Rainbow, the party of guests were already assembled, though it was still nearly an hour before the appointed feast-time. But by this means they could not only enjoy the slow advent of their pleasure ; they had also ample leisure to talk of Silas Marner's strange history, and arrive by due degrees at the conclusion that he had brought a blessing on himself by acting like a father to a lone motherless child. Even the farrier did not negative this sentiment : on the contrary, he took it up as peculiarly his own, and invited any hardy person present to contradict him. But he met with no contradiction ; and all differences among the company were merged in a general agreement with Mr. Snell's sentiment, that



when a man had deserved his good luck, it was the part of his neighbours to wish him joy.

As the bridal group approached, a hearty cheer was raised in the Rainbow yard ; and Ben Winthrop, whose jokes had retained their acceptable flavour, found it agreeable to turn in there and receive congratulations ; not requiring the proposed interval of quiet at the Stone-pits before joining the company.

Eppie had a larger garden than she had ever expected there now ; and in other ways there had been alterations at the expense of Mr. Cass, the landlord, to suit Silas's larger family. For he and Eppie had declared that they would rather stay at the Stone-pits than go to any new home. The garden was fenced with stones on two sides, but in front there was an open fence, through which the flowers shone with answering gladness, as the four united people came within sight of them.

'Oh, father,' said Eppie, 'what a pretty home ours is! I think nobody could be happier than we are.'

THE END.

# NOTES

## PART I.

### CHAPTER I.

**SUMMARY.**—In former times ignorant villagers were accustomed to view with suspicion and even to attribute to the influence of the devil whatever they were unfamiliar with. So it happened that when Silas Marner, a pale-faced weaver, with short-sighted protruding eyes, came to live in the village of Raveloe, he was regarded with suspicion, not unmixed with fear, by the peasants, who were accustomed to think of God less as a kind father than as a powerful Being, who could with difficulty be dissuaded from doing them harm. Raveloe was an agricultural village, where a few leading farmers and landowners lived in comfort despite their bad farming, since they were able to sell their produce at a good profit, owing to the prevalence of war in Europe.

Silas Marner was subject to cataleptic fits. Before coming to Raveloe he had lived in a large manufacturing town, where he belonged to an obscure religious sect, among whose members the fits, to which he was subject, were attributed to divine agency, although Silas Marner could not remember, and was too truthful to invent any visions having occurred to him when under the influence of these fits.

Among the members of the church to which Silas Marner belonged was a great friend of his called William Dane, whose conceited, self-reliant nature was very different from the simple humility of Silas Marner. Thus William Dane believed that he was certain of salvation, while Silas Marner only hoped for this blessing. Silas Marner was betrothed to a servant-girl named Sarah. William Dane used to accompany Marner and Sarah in their walks. Marner had no suspicion of William Dane. But William Dane used to say to other members of the church that Silas Marner's fits were due, not to the favour

of God, but to the influence of Satan. Now the senior deacon of the church fell sick, and was watched among others by Silas Marner and William Dane, the latter relieving the former at two in the morning. But one night Silas Marner while watching the deacon had a fit, from which he did not recover till four in the morning, when it was found that the deacon was dead, that William Dane was not present, that the church money had been removed from the desk near the deacon's bed, and that a knife, belonging to Silas Marner, was lying in a drawer of the desk. Suspicion of the theft fell upon Silas Marner, and he was summoned before a meeting of the church. As it was considered wrong by the church members to report the matter to the police, they knelt in prayer, and then drew lots in order to discover the guilty person. The lots declared Silas Marner guilty.

Now up to this time Silas had had faith in God, and believed that He would prove his innocence by means of the lots. When the lots declared Silas guilty, his heart was broken, and he ceased to have faith in God, or love for his fellow men. To complete his troubles, Sarah broke off her engagement with him and married William Dane. Soon it was known among the members of the church that Marner had left the town. We have already seen that he had gone to the village of Raveloe, where the villagers distrusted him on account of his strange appearance and the unfamiliar sound of his loom. They attributed his fits to the devil, and might have persecuted him, if he had not been useful to them, buying thread from the poor, and selling cloth to the rich.

PAGE 1. 1. *In the days*: i.e. at the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

1-2. *when the spinning-wheels . . . farmhouses*: in the days of 'home industries', before the 'factory system' had fully developed, when farmers' wives still spun their own yarn.

2. *clothed . . . thread-lace*: clad in silk dresses trimmed with fine lace.

4. *in districts far . . . lanes*: on the narrow ways in remote country districts.

5. *deep . . . hills*: far in the interior of the hills.

6. *pallid undersized men*: pale men of short stature, of poor physique.

*by the side . . . brawny country-folk* : by comparison with the big and muscular villagers (natives of the soil).

7-8. *looked . . . race* : seemed like the relics of a conquered people, driven from their homes and lands by a stronger race.

9. *alien-looking* : foreign-looking.

10. *on the upland* : on the hill-side.

*against* : by contrast with.

11. *what dog . . . heavy bag ?* : no dog can see without uneasiness a person bending under the weight of a heavy burden. This is a 'rhetorical question', one that carries with it its own answer, and is asked, not to obtain information, but to impart vigour or passion to an oration or narrative.

11-12. *These pale men* : linen-weavers.

12. *rarely stirred abroad* : seldom moved from their homes.

*without . . . burden* : without carrying a bag whose contents roused the superstitious fears of the ignorant peasantry.

13-18. *The shepherd himself . . . Evil One* : although the shepherd had no reason to suppose that the bag contained anything more than thread spun from flax, or cotton woven from the thread, and although he admitted that weaving was a necessary trade, he yet suspected that it could not be carried on without the aid of the devil.

18-22. *In that far-off time . . . knife-grinder* : In those distant times anything unusual, or which occurred but seldom and at irregular intervals, such as the arrival of a man with a box of petty merchandise or of one whose business it was to sharpen knives, was wont to excite the superstitious fears of an ignorant peasantry.

22-3. *had their . . . origin* : lived, or came from.

23-5. *and how . . . father and mother* : and how (demanded the villagers) could the existence of a man be accounted for, if you were not even acquainted with any one who knew his parents ?

26-7. *the world . . . mystery* : anything with which they were not personally acquainted in their daily lives seemed strange and incomprehensible to the villagers in those far-off days.

27-2. 3. *to their untravelled thought . . . the spring* : to their limited experience and imagination the life of a travelling weaver was as incomprehensible as the

existence of birds of passage, like the swallows, which fly to warmer countries in the winter, but return to England in the spring.

PAGE 2 3. *a settler* : one who came to take up his abode permanently among them.

*distant parts* : remote districts.

4. *hardly ever . . . distrust* : seldom ceased to be an object of some suspicion.

5-7. *which would have prevented . . . crime* : so that no one would have felt any astonishment if, after leading a perfectly respectable life for a long time, he had suddenly perpetrated some crime.

7-9. *especially . . . handicraft* : and still more would this be the case if the settler were at all famous for book-learning, or exhibited any dexterity in the manual arts.

9-11. *All cleverness . . . suspicious* : the peasantry looked askance at all skill, whether shown in quickness in the (to them) difficult art of speech, or in any other accomplishment with which they were not familiar.

12-14. *honest folks . . . weather* : (the villagers thought that) trustworthy people, those whom they had known from their birth upwards, were seldom very intelligent or skilful, except in such things as weather-prophecy—foretelling rain or fine weather from the signs in the sky.

15-17. *and the process . . . conjuring* : and the means of acquiring skill or quickness of any kind were so completely unknown to the villagers, that they seemed to them as marvellous as feats of conjuring.

*conjuring* : juggling, to practise (apparently) magical arts.

20. *aliens* : strangers, foreigners.

*rustic neighbours* : those who lived near them in the country.

21-2. *usually contracted . . . loneliness* : they generally developed those peculiar ways, which are a mark of people cut off and isolated from their neighbours.

23. *this century* : the nineteenth century.

24. *worked . . . vocation* : followed his calling.

25. *the nutty hedgerows* : rows of bushes with nut-trees growing amongst them, forming the fences and boundaries between fields.

27. *stone-pit* : quarry from which stones had once been dug.

27-36. *The questionable sound . . . weaver*: the mysterious sound of Silas's weaving-machine, so different from the pleasant well-known sound of the wind separating the corn from the chaff, or the regular beat of the instrument for threshing corn, half charmed and half terrified the boys of Raveloe, who would frequently give up gathering nuts, or robbing birds' nests in order to look in at the window of the stone cottage, overcoming any fear of the mysterious movements of the weaving-machine by a sense of amused contempt for its varied sounds and for the huddled form of the weaver, who, as he worked the machine with his feet, seemed to resemble a prisoner at the treadmill.

36. *tread-mill*: a large wheel with steps, upon which prisoners formerly trod, thus causing the wheel to work machinery.

37-8. *pausing . . . thread*: ceasing for a moment to work his machine in order to disentangle a knot in the thread, or to tie a broken thread.

39. *chary of his time*: unwilling to spare time from the pursuit of his trade.

39-40. *he liked . . . so ill*: he disliked their intrusion so much.

40-3. 1. *he would . . . loom*: he used to get down from his seat at his weaving-machine.

PAGE 3. 1-3. *would fix . . . terror*: would stare at them in such a manner as to cause them invariably to run away in fear.

3-8. *For how . . . rear?*: for they did not realize that the large brown staring eyes in the pallid countenance of Silas Marner could only perceive clearly objects that were close at hand. They thought rather that such a terrible gaze had power to afflict the hindmost in the sight with painful twitches in the muscles, or softening of the bones, or a twisted mouth.

10-11. *if . . . mind*: if he wished.

11. *still . . . darkly*: still more mysteriously.

11-13. *that if you could . . . doctor*: that if one were sufficiently polite to the Evil One, he might cure diseases, and so save the expense of paying doctor's bills.

13-17. *Such strange . . . benignity*: one who listened carefully to the conversation of the older peasants might even now find curious traces of the ancient worship of

devils among them; for the untutored intellect finds it hard to conceive a supreme being kind as well as powerful.

17-23. *A shadowy conception . . . religious faith*: men who have always been oppressed by the struggle for existence, in whose lives sore labour has never been relieved by any deep religious feeling, tend readily to regard the Unseen God as a vague power, who can with difficulty be dissuaded from doing them an injury.

23-8. *To them pain and mishap . . . to fear*: it is much easier for them to contemplate the possibility of pain and misfortune than of joy and happiness. It is almost impossible for them to imagine anything to wish or hope for, because their memories are full of evils which they constantly fear may recur in the future.

28. *fancy*: think of.

30. *in his last illness*: on his death-bed.

32-3. *I've never been used . . . victual*: I have always been accustomed to plain, homely fare.

33-5. *Experience . . . appetite*: there had been nothing in his life which could raise up the memory of anything he could think of as desirable to eat.

36-7. *where many . . . new voices*: where many of the old customs remained, unchecked by the growth of education and by the spread of new ideas.

37. *Not that*: (I do) not (mean to say) that.

38. *barren*: infertile and thinly populated.

38-9. *lying on . . . civilization*: almost in the wilderness.

39. *meagre*: thin.

*thinly-scattered*: living at some distance from one another.

PAGE 4. 2. *speaking . . . point of view*: regarded from the religious aspect (ironical).

3. *paid . . . tithes*: paid such large sums towards the support of the clergy as to make the post of clergyman in Raveloo a coveted one.

*tithe*: a tenth part; the tenth part of the produce of land allotted to the clergy.

4. *nestled*: comfortably situated.

*snug*: cosy.

*well-wooded hollow*: valley full of trees.

5. *turnpike*: a gate on a main road where toll was levied on passing vehicles.

5-7. *where it was never reached . . . public opinion* : impervious alike to the sound of the horn blown from the passing stage-coach and to the waves of popular feeling.

9. *heart* : centre.

10. *homesteads* : houses.

*well-walled* : surrounded with high walls in a good state of preservation.

10-11. *ornamental weathercocks* : vanes of artistic design.

11. *close upon* : near to.

11-12. *lifting . . . rectory* : of a more commanding appearance than the clergyman's residence.

12-13. *which peeped from* : which was first visible from.

14-21. *a village . . . Easter tide* : by looking at the village one could tell at once who were the men of the highest social position in it, and an experienced observer could detect immediately that there was no great nobleman's house or park in the neighbourhood, but that there were several leading inhabitants in Raveloe who made a comfortable income, although using bad methods of cultivation, and were able to live in an expensive manner, celebrating the great festivals of the Church with much feasting and merriment.

(Owing to the Napoleonic wars in Europe there was little competition from foreign grain, and so they could sell their corn easily.)

✓ 24. *prominent* : protruding.

✓ 24-30. *whose appearance . . . 'North'ard'* : although his appearance would not have seemed remarkable to people of ordinary education and knowledge of the world, it excited the curiosity and suspicion of the neighbouring peasants, when taken in conjunction with his unusual method of earning a livelihood, and his arrival from a mysterious country known to the villagers as 'North'ard' (towards the North).

30-1. *So had . . . life* : also his method of living had (mysterious peculiarities).

31. *no comer* : no visitor, no caller.

*to step . . . door-sill* : to enter the house.

32. *strolled* : walked out.

*a pint* : a measure (one-eighth gallon) of beer.

33. *the Rainbow* : the name of the village inn.

*to gossip . . . wheel-wright's* : to have a chat with the maker of cart-wheels.



33-4. *he sought . . . woman* : he did not seek the companionship of any man or woman.

34-5. *save for . . . calling* : except on matters of business.

35. *to supply . . . necessities* : to purchase the necessities of life.

36-7. *he would . . . will* : he would never ask the hand of any one of them in marriage, since he was displeasing to them.

38. *quite as if . . . declare* : just as if he had heard them (the Ravecloo lasses) say.

39-5. 1. *This view . . . eyes* : the villagers had another reason for their opinion about Silas Marner, in addition to his pallid countenance and peculiar eyes.

PAGE 5. 2. *mole* : a little animal with soft fur and very small eyes which burrows in the ground. It is very common in the country districts of England.

*averred* : asserted positively.

4. *leaning against a stile* : supporting himself against the steps in a fence.

5-6. *a man in his senses* : a sane man.

7. *set* : fixed and staring.

9. *clutched* : held firmly.

*they'd* : they had.

10-13. *but just . . . walked off* : but at the very moment when Jem Rodney had come to the conclusion that the weaver was dead, he recovered his senses, in the twinkling of an eye, so to speak, and walked away after wishing him 'Good night'.

14. *more by token* : (and added) as a further proof of the truth of his assertion.

16. *saw-pit* : a pit where wood is cut with a saw.

17. *a word . . . incredible* : in ironical reference to the habit, not confined to villagers, of thinking that a phenomenon is explained when we have given a name to it.

18. *argumentative* : fond of disputing.

19. *clerk of the parish* : one who leads the responses, and otherwise aids the priest, in an Anglican church.

*shook his head* : expressed his disapproval of this explanation by shaking his head.

20. *to go off . . . fit* : to become unconscious owing to a sudden seizure.

*and not fall down* : without falling down.

21. The whole of this passage to the top of p. 6 is in

the indirect narration, and should be prefaced by 'he said that'. Mr. Macey argued that all sudden seizures are attacks of paralysis making the sufferer helpless, and depriving him of the use of his limbs. An attack from which a man recovered and walked away as if nothing had happened must be due to his soul temporarily leaving his body—to seek unlawful wisdom from the Evil One. This explained Silas Marner's knowledge of charms, and of the medicinal properties of certain plants, as well as the remarkable cure he had effected of Sally Oates's heart disease. Such a man should be spoken to politely, if only to prevent him from doing one harm, thought Mr. Macey.

21. *A fit was a stroke*: a sudden seizure must be due to an attack of paralysis.

23. *throw him . . . parish*: make him dependent upon parish relief, i.e. upon the provision made for paupers in his parish.

*parish*: an ecclesiastical district under one priest.

24. *to look to*: to expect aid from.

24-6. *it was no stroke . . . Gee!*: a man who could, in a state of unconsciousness, stand as still as a horse harnessed to a cart, and could then recover and walk away as suddenly as the horse moves on when urged by the driver, could not be suffering from an attack of paralysis.

29-32. *and that was how folks . . . parson*: and in this way (i.e. by allowing their souls to leave their bodies) people learnt too much, for in this bodiless condition they obtained instruction from those (i.e. from evil spirits) who could teach them more than others could learn from their own intelligence and the parish priest.

34. *charms*: spells, talismans supposed to afford protection against evil fortune.

35. *no more than*: only.

PAGE 6. 1. *he was worth speaking fair*: it was worth while to speak politely to Silas Marner, otherwise he might do one some injury.

3-11. *It was partly to this vague fear . . . year's end*: that Marner's eccentric appearance and behaviour did not cause him to be ill treated was in some measure owing to this ill-defined fear that the villagers entertained of him, but his safety was still more due to the benefit which the wealthier women of the parish, and even the more thrifty of the peasant class, derived from the nature of

his occupation, now that the old linen-weaver in the next parish of Tarley was dead. For he used to weave the thread which they spun from the fibres of the flax plant into linen cloth for them.

3. *vague fear* : i.e. the fear of Silas Marner entertained by the villagers, but not clearly realized or defined by them.

11-14. *and their sense . . . wove for them* : and any dislike or doubt they entertained about him would have been neutralized by their perception of his usefulness, unless he had failed in the quality or quantity of the cloth he wove for them.

16. *impressions* : feelings.

17. *the change . . . habit* : that they had become accustomed to him.

22. *one important addition* : one additional opinion worth mentioning about Silas Marner.

23-5. *that Master Marner . . . himself* : that Mr. Marner had accumulated a large amount of money somewhere, and that he was a wealthier man than some who were of higher social position than himself.

26-31. *But while opinion . . . solitude* : but although small change had taken place in the estimate formed of Silas Marner by his neighbours, and there was little apparent alteration in his mode of life, much had happened, and many changes had taken place in his mind and character, as must happen when a sensitive, emotional man has taken refuge in, or been compelled by the behaviour of his fellow men to adopt a solitary life.

31-8. *His life . . . community* : before Silas Marner settled in Raveloe his time and interests had been fully engaged in the mental occupation and in the intimate friendships which characterize the life of a working man, who from youth upwards has been a member of a small religious community, in which the humblest member, though not an ordained priest, or minister, may occupy an important position if he be a good speaker, and, even though silent, has still the right to vote in the election of representatives to the governing body of the church.

35. *layman* : one of the laity, i.e. belonging to the people as distinguished from the clergy.

39. *highly thought of* : much esteemed.

*little hidden world* : small obscure religious society.

40. *to itself* : among its own members.

PAGE 7. 1. of *exemplary life*: of the highest moral character.

2. *ardent faith*: earnest religious belief.

2-3. a *peculiar . . . in him*: he had become an object of special regard.

4. a *mysterious . . . consciousness*: a strange stiffness and state of temporary unconsciousness.

6-10. *To have sought . . . therein*: if a doctor had been asked to ascertain the cause of Marner's illness, it would have been considered by Marner himself, as well as by his religious teachers, as a wilful shutting himself out from the benefit of any supernatural meaning that might be connected with his illness.

10-11. *Silas . . . discipline*: Silas was evidently a member of the community chosen for special treatment at the hands of God.

11-14. *though the effort . . . trance*: and though the attempt to explain it was checked by the fact that, during the time he was to all outward appearance unconscious, he had not experienced any inner or spiritual revelation.

14-16. *yet it was . . . fervour*: yet he and some of his fellows believed that the effect of this visitation was apparent in an increase of spiritual illumination and of religious enthusiasm.

16-18. *A less truthful . . . memory*: if he had been less honourable he might have been tempted to say, after he recovered consciousness, that he remembered having had a revelation from God, although such a 'revelation' would have been the creature of his own imagination.

17. *a vision*: an appearance, or revelation, vouchsafed from God.

18. *resurgent*: literally, rising again; here, reviving.

18-19. *a less sane . . . creation*: had he been at all subject to delusions he might have believed in the figment of his own imagination.

19-20. *but Silas . . . honest*: but Silas was not subject to delusions, neither was he in the habit of telling lies.

21-2. *culture had not . . . mystery*: his education had not been sufficient to enable him to keep his religious feelings and ideas within their proper bounds.

22-3. *and so it spread . . . knowledge*: and so he allowed religion to intrude itself into the sphere of reasoned knowledge, with which it has no concern.

23-5. *He had . . . preparation* : his mother had taught him how to prepare medicines from certain plants.

25-30. *a little store . . . without herbs* : she had given him these scraps of medical knowledge as a solemn legacy, but in recent years he had doubted whether it was right to make use of this knowledge, since he thought that medicines prepared from plants were useless without prayer, and that prayer might cure diseases without the aid of medicine.

30-3. *so that . . . temptation* : so that the pleasure derived from his mother of searching the fields for medicinal plants began to appear to him as a temptation to evil-doing.

32. *foxglove* : a plant with bell-shaped flowers which has medicinal properties. Useful in diseases of the heart.

*dandelion* : a well-known field plant with jagged leaves and bright yellow flowers. Useful in liver complaints.

*collisfoot* : a medicinal plant with large soft leaves. Used in cases of asthma.

37. *their Lantern Yard brethren* : the members of the religious community which met in Lantern Yard.

38. *David and Jonathan* : inseparable friends (vide 2 Samuel i. 26).

39-40. *a shining . . . picity* : a bright example of religion in a young man.

40-8. 3. *though somewhat . . . teachers* : though rather too harsh in his judgements upon those members of the Church who were not so pious as himself, and so impressed with the idea of his own goodness, as to think that he knew more than his religious instructors.

PAGE 8. 3. *blemishes* : faults.

5-7. *for Marner . . . contradiction* : for Marner was one of those sensitive diffident souls, who in their youth and before they have gained knowledge of the world think highly of those who can command them, and place implicit confidence in those who gainsay them.

7-13. *The expression . . . William Dane* : the look of simple trust in Marner's face intensified by the vacant stare—that timid gazelle-like gaze, which is characteristic of short-sighted people with protruding eyes—contrasted violently with the attempt to repress a too evident self-satisfaction which lay hidden in the little oblique eyes and the firmly closed mouth of William Dane.

14. *topics* : themes, subjects of conversation.

15. *Assurance of salvation* : certainty of divine forgiveness and of immortality in heaven.

15-17. *Silas . . . fear* : Silas admitted that his hopes of salvation were always mingled with doubt.

17. *longing wonder* : wistful surprise.

18. *possessed . . . assurance* : he had been quite certain of his own salvation.

19-22. *ever since . . . open Bible* : from the time when, having turned from evil to righteousness, he had seen in a vision a white page of the Bible, empty save for words which clearly announced that he had been selected for salvation.

22-5. *Such colloquies . . . twilight* : such conversations have engaged many a couple of pallid weavers, whose untutored spirits have resembled little insects flying unregarded in the gathering darkness.

26. *unsuspecting* : trustful.

*the friendship* : between him and William Dane.

27. *had suffered no chill* : had in no way cooled.

27-8. *even . . . closer kind* : even when he contracted a friendship of a more intimate nature with some one else, i.e. became betrothed to a young woman.

29. *engaged* : promised in marriage, betrothed.

*servant-woman* : maid-servant.

30. *mutual savings* : money which each of them had accumulated.

32. *Sarah . . . interviews* : Sarah had no objection to William sometimes accompanying them in their Sunday walks (lit. meetings).

34. *cataleptic fit* : nervous seizure.

36. *queries* : inquiries.

*expressions of interest . . . fellow-members* : sympathetic words spoken to Silas Marner by his co-religionists.

37-9. *William's suggestion . . . dealings* : only the idea put forward by William was out of harmony with the kindly feelings of the rest towards a fellow-member thus selected by God for special treatment.

40. *trance* : state of unconsciousness in which a person, though apparently dead, often has dreams or visions.

✓ PAGE 9. 1. *visitation of Satan* : diabolical possession.

2. *to see . . . thing* : to take care that he was concealing no terrible sin.

3-4. *to accept rebuke . . . office* : to receive warning and fault-finding as an act of brotherly kindness.

4-5. *felt . . . him* : did not experience any feeling of indignation, but only sorrow, at the suspicion cast upon him by his friend William Dane.

7-10. *that Sarah's manner . . . dislike* : that the behaviour of Sarah towards him began to show a strange alternation between an attempt to show increased affection, and evidence of fear and loathing which she was unable to conceal.

11. *to break off their engagement* : to cancel their promise of marriage.

14. *strict investigation* : careful inquiry.

15. *render* : give.

15-16. *sanctioned . . . community* : approved by the members of the church.

17. *deacon* : church official.

19. *brethren or sisters* : male or female members of the church.

20. *turn* : share.

21. *relieving the other* : taking the place of the other.

22. *contrary to expectation* : to every one's surprise.

22-3. *seemed . . . recovery* : appeared to be mending in health.

28. *rigid* : stiff.

28-9. *asked himself* : wondered.

PAGE 10. 2. *the vestry* : a room in a church where the vestments, church records, &c., are kept, and where the church officials meet. A committee room.

3. *who to him . . . people* : who in his opinion were the elect of God.

4. *fixed solemnly* : gazing seriously.

9. *interrogation* : question.

10. *to confess and repent* : to admit his fault and express regret for it.

11. *bureau* : writing-table.

12. *church money* : money collected from the members for the benefit of the church.

17. *God will clear me* : God will prove my innocence.

20. *three pound . . . savings* : three pounds five shillings which I have put by myself from my own earnings.

22. *groaned* : expressed his disapproval by uttering a low moaning sound.

*minister* : pastor.

22-3. *The proof . . . you* : the evidence against you is very strong.

24. *the night last past* : last night.

25. *departed* : departed this life, dead.

27. *his place* : i. e. by the bedside of the deacon.

28-9. *neglected . . . body* : you did not proclaim the news of the deacon's death as soon as it occurred, and you paid no attention to the corpse.

31-2. *I must have had . . . under* : I must have been in a state of unconsciousness such as you have all seen me in.

33-4. *while I was not . . . body* : while my spirit had left my body.

37. *bag* : the bag containing the church money.

*tucked* : hidden.

38. *On this* : thereupon.

40-11. 1. *turned a look . . . on him* : turned and looked upon him with a glance of stern rebuke.

PAGE 11. 1-2. *we have . . . together* : we have been constant companions.

4-5. *how do I know . . . heart* : how can I tell what wicked purposes you have concealed in your heart to give Satan an opportunity to triumph over you.

9. *impetuously* : vehemently.

9-10. *when he seemed . . . shock* : when he appeared to be prevented by some sudden and violent but hidden emotion.

10. *that sent the flush back* : that made him pale again.

11. *feebly* : in a low tone.

13. *the knife . . . pocket* : therefore it must have been placed in the drawer by some one else in order to incriminate Silas Marner. He now realized that the real thief and author of the plot was his false friend, William Dane.

16. *he would . . . explanation* : he would not attempt to justify himself. He made no accusation against William Dane, although he was now aware of his guilt.

18. *I am sore stricken* : I am much afflicted.

21. *resort to legal measures* : any appeal to the law.

22. *contrary to the principles* : opposed to the rules.

23. *prosecution* : legal proceedings.

24-5. *even if it had been . . . community* : even if there



had been nothing in the matter to bring shame upon the church.

26. *to take other measures* : to adopt other means.

27-30. *This resolution . . . towns* : this determination can astonish only those who are ignorant of the hidden religious life which has prevailed in the narrow streets and by-ways of English cities.

30-5. *Silas knelt . . . bruised* : Silas joined in the prayer with his fellow members, believing that his own innocence would at once be proved by the direct intervention of God, but feeling that sadness and grief were in store for him even though he were acquitted of the charge brought against him, because his confidence in his fellow man had been sadly shaken owing to the treacherous and dishonest conduct of his friend Dane.

31. *knelt* : in prayer.

*relying on* : believing that.

32. *being certified* : would be proved.

*by immediate divine interference* : by the sudden intervention of God.

33. *behind* : in store.

35. *bruised* : shaken.

36-9. *He was solemnly . . . church* : with due ceremony he was deprived of the privileges of church membership, and required to restore the money he was said to have stolen ; only if he admitted his crime as evidence of a desire to atone for it, could he be received again into the bosom of the church.

36. *suspended* : removed for the time being.

37. *to render up* : to restore.

38. *confession* : admitting his guilt.

*as the sign . . . repentance* : as evidence that he was sorry for his sin.

39. *within . . . the church* : into the bosom of the church, into church membership.

PAGE 12. 2. *shaken by agitation* : trembling with emotion.

4. *a strap* : a leathern band.

6. *you have woven . . . door* : you have planned to throw suspicion of the crime upon me.

*woven a plot* : devised a plan.

*to lay . . . door* : to charge me with the crime.

7. *for all that* : in spite of all your wickedness.

9. *bears witness* : gives evidence.

10. *There was . . . blasphemy*: every one was shocked at this impiety. There was a thrill of sorrow throughout the assembly at this impious statement.

11-12. *I leave . . . or not*: I leave my fellow members to decide whether these words of Silas Marner, which we have just heard, were inspired by the devil or not.

15-16. *which is . . . nature*: which almost causes insanity in a person of an affectionate disposition.

16. *In the bitterness . . . spirit*: in the sadness of his broken heart, in his poignant grief.

17. *cast me off too*: repudiate me also.

18-20. *if she did not . . . his was*: if she did not accept the evidence of the lots against him, she must entirely lose her faith in God, as he had.

20-4. *To people . . . reflection*: people to whom the appropriate outward form or mode of expression of religious feeling is a matter for reasoning or argument, cannot easily understand the feelings of those uneducated persons, who have never learnt by reasoning or meditation to separate the outward form from the inner spirit.

24-7. *We are apt . . . drawing lots*: we should be likely to consider it certain that a man like Marner would dispute the authority of a (so-called) divine judgement, obtained by drawing lots.

27-9. *but to him . . . known*: but this would have implied a degree of self-reliance quite foreign to the religious experience of Silas Marner.

29-31. *and he must . . . faith*: and he would have had to make the attempt at a time when all his mental vigour was exhausted by the grief which accompanies a feeling of misplaced confidence in God and man.

34. *for which . . . culpable*: which no man can be blamed for entertaining.

## CHAPTER II.

SUMMARY.—Raveloe was a very different place from Lantern Yard, and therefore Silas Marner found it easy, when he went to Raveloe, to forget his former mode of life. Lantern Yard was in a big manufacturing town, and the members of the religious community to which Marner had belonged were earnestly religious. Raveloe was in the country, and its inhabitants lived careless, prosperous lives, eating and drinking heavily, and caring little for religion.

After Silas Marner's great trouble he sought forgetfulness in working continually at his loom like a spinning-insect. But he soon began to love the gold coins which he received as payment for the cloth he wove.

About this time he relieved a cobbler's wife of the distressing symptoms of heart disease by giving her medicine prepared from certain herbs, which had benefited his own mother, who had suffered from the same complaint. This cure gave Silas Marner a reputation for the possession of magical powers, and he might have earned considerable sums of money by selling 'charms' against diseases, had he cared to do so. But Silas had never experienced any temptation to earn money by dishonest means. So he drove the applicants from his door.

Now that he was quite solitary, he became a miser. He loved to hoard money for its own sake. One little touch of human feeling was revealed in him, when, having broken the earthen vessel which for twelve years he had carried daily to the well for water, he picked up the fragments, joined them together, and put the pot in its old place in his room, so that he might not forget the services it had rendered.

He spent his small silver coins in buying his daily food and other necessities, but the large silver coins and gold pieces he kept to gloat over at night, drawing them out of the hole in the floor where he had hidden them in two leather bags, plunging his hands into them, counting them, and arranging them in symmetrical piles.

So he spent the first fifteen years of his life in Raveloe.

PAGE 13. 9-18. *Even people . . . nourished*: even persons whom education has enabled to accept change with equanimity sometimes experience difficulty in firmly maintaining their former opinions and religious belief, and even in feeling that their past life was real, when they suddenly change their place of residence and come to live as strangers in a strange land, where their neighbours are unacquainted with their previous lives, and have no sympathy for them, where even the face of nature is changed, and men have other ideals and opinions than those which have moulded their characters.

18-23. *Minds . . . memories*: men who have given up their belief in God, and their former love for their fellow

men, have perhaps tried to obtain forgetfulness by voluntarily leaving their country and their home, and by going to a strange land, where their former life seems to be a dream because no sign of it remains, and where their present life appears unreal because it is disconnected from any memories of the past.

*Lethæan*: causing forgetfulness. *Lethe*, the river of forgetfulness in Hades.

23-5. *But even . . . Marner*: but even the experience of such people will hardly enable them fully to understand the effect produced on the mind of a simple weaver like Silas Marner.

27-8. *set . . . hill-sides*: situated within view of a widely extended range of hills.

28-9. *than . . . region*: than this flat district covered with trees.

29-30. *where . . . hedgerows*: where he seemed to be concealed even from the sky by the protecting trees and sheltering hedges.

31-5. *when he rose . . . dispensations*: when he got up from his bed in the deep silence of the dawn, and looked from his cottage windows upon bushes covered with moisture and upon thickly growing clumps of grass, there was nothing in Raveloe in any way connected with that past life, chiefly occupied with the little church in Lantern Yard, which was once sacred to him as the place where he believed God had dealings with him.

PAGE 14. 1. *pews*: enclosed seats in the church.

1-2. *well-known figures*: people well acquainted with one another as members of the same church.

2. *with . . . rustling*: with a muffled sound, making as little noise as possible as they came in.

3-4. *pitched . . . petition*: uttered in the special accent of prayer.

4. *occult and familiar*: well known and yet mysterious (because allegorical or metaphorical).

5. *amulet*: an ornament, frequently a jewel, worn as a charm against disease or other misfortune.

6. *unquestioned doctrine*: religious instruction which no one of his listeners presumed to dispute.

7. *swayed . . . fro*: inclined his body first in one direction and then in another.

7-8. *handled . . . manner*: opening and shutting the

Bible in a manner which showed he was very familiar with its contents.

8-10. *the very pauses . . . song* : the minister used to recite the hymns two lines at a time, and then those lines were sung by the congregation. Hence to one at a little distance the reading of the lines between the recurring bursts of song had the effect of a pause.

10-11. *these things . . . Marner* : these were the means by which God communicated with Silas Marner—or so he believed.

12. *the fostering . . . emotions* : the means by which his religious feelings were nourished and maintained.

12-13. *they were . . . earth* : in his opinion they represented the teachings of Christianity and the rule of God in the world.

14-15. *knows nothing . . . abstractions* : knows little and cares less for the abstract meanings conveyed by those difficult words.

15-17. *as . . . nurture* : just as a little child, turning to its mother for rest and nourishment, could not possibly define the term 'parental love' in the abstract.

19. *world in Raveloe* : Raveloe and its surroundings.

19-20. *orchards . . . plenty* : fruit gardens full of fruit, although apparently uncared for.

21. *churchyard* : a burial-place enclosing or adjoining a church.

22. *lounging . . . doors* : leaning on their own door-posts.

*in service-time* : while the religious service was going on in the church.

*purple-faced* : ruddy-faced.

23. *jogging . . . Rainbow* : riding, or driving, slowly along the country roads, or walking into the inn, called the Rainbow, where liquor was sold.

24. *supped heavily* : ate large quantities of food at the evening meal.

26. *laying up . . . to come* : preparing as many linen garments as would be required for their white raiment in heaven.

27-9. *There were . . . pain* : there was no one in Raveloe who could utter a syllable which would pain Silas Marner by reminding him of his forsaken religious belief.

29. *In . . . world* : in ancient times.

32. *bordering heights*: the mountains which separated one country from another.

32-3. *and be . . . native gods*: and be outside the jurisdiction of the gods of his own country.

33-5. *whose presence . . . birth*: who were only found among the trees, streams, and hills of his native land.

' 35-8. *And poor Silas . . . deity*: and poor Silas experienced an ill-defined emotion somewhat similar to the feelings of prehistoric men when they fled in terror or anger from the wrath of an unfavourable deity.

39-40. *among . . . prayer-meetings*: i.e. at Lantern Yard.

PAGE 15. 2-4. *knowing . . . bitterness*: without possessing, or feeling any necessity for, that faith in God, which in his case had been turned into grief and pain.

4-6. *The little light . . . night*: his former faith had not been deep or broad enough to show him any general truth as apart from his own narrow tenets, and therefore, when he lost that faith, he was left in complete religious darkness.

7. *movement*: inclination.

8. *unremittingly*: without ceasing.

10. *far . . . night*: until very late at night.

*finish the tale*: to complete the number (of pieces of cloth).

11. *table-linen*: tablecloths.

14. *from pure impulse*: merely from instinct.

' 15-17. *Every man's work . . . life*: every man's work, done faithfully and regularly, proves worth doing for its own sake, and helps to occupy those periods of his life which are not made happy by love.

17-20. *Silas's . . . effort*: it gave Silas some contentment to use repeatedly and quickly the weaver's implement for passing the thread of the woof between the threads of the warp, and to see the square pattern on the cloth multiplied as he worked.

/ 23-6. *and all these . . . insect*: and the satisfaction of all these direct requirements, together with his weaving, combined to make his life resemble the unreasoning industry of a spider.

29. *was all dark*: held no hope.

29-30. *for . . . him*: for he was not aware of any invisible, loving God watching over him.

30-3. *Thought . . . nerves* : now that his thoughts could no longer flow in their former restricted channel, he was so completely confused by his sorrows that his reasoning powers were stunned, and his capacity for love and friendship seemed to have perished, because it had been injured in its tenderest part.

36. *wholesale dealer* : one who bought and sold in large quantities.

37. *after a lower rate* : on a smaller scale.

38-9. *a large proportion . . . charity* : a considerable amount had been spent in the cause of religion and in relieving the poor.

PAGE 16. 3. *vista* : prospect.

4. *It was . . . that* : there was no necessity for him to ask what use the guineas were to him.

5. *them* : the guineas.

*palm* : hand.

6. *faces* : surfaces.

7. *clement of life* : interest in life.

8. *subsisting . . . from* : existing quite apart from.

9. *cut off* : separated.

9-11. *The . . . breadth* : the hand of Silas Marner had been familiar with the feel of hard-earned money even before he was fully grown.

11-14. *for twenty years . . . toil* : since his first youth that strange thing, money, had been to him the token of worldly prosperity, and the direct incentive to work.

14-16. *He had seemed . . . then* : he had not apparently cared much for money when every penny he earned was spent on satisfying some want or desire ; for in those days he did not love money for its own sake, but for what it could buy.

16-19. *But now . . . desire* : but now, when he had no longer any object on which he desired to spend his earnings, the oft-repeated act of gazing at the money, and holding it in his hand with the feeling that it represented something accomplished, gave him an object in life.

21-2. *gathering gloom* : increasing darkness.

23-5. *which seemed . . . neighbours* : which seemed to afford an opportunity of forming some friendships among his neighbours.

27. *dropsy*: a disease evidenced by the accumulation of water in the body.

28. *as the precursors of*: as preceding.

29-30. *He felt a rush of pity . . . remembrance*: he experienced a sudden feeling of pity when he saw the suffering woman, and recalled the case of his own mother.

31. *a simple . . . foxglove*: a simple medicine prepared from the leaves of the foxglove.

33. *ease* (verb): lessen the pain.

33-4. *In this office of charity*: in performing this kindly duty.

35-6. *a sense . . . life*: a tie of similarity between his life at Raveloe and his life at Lantern Yard.

36-8. *which might have . . . shrunk*: which might have proved the first step in saving him from the dull and selfish life into which he had sunk.

38-40. *But Sally Oates's disease*: but owing to her illness Sally Oates had become a person of note, and had excited the curiosity of her neighbours.

PAGE 17. 1. *'stuff'*: colloquial rustic term for medicine.

2. *became . . . discourse*: became a subject of conversation everywhere throughout the district.

2-28. The whole of this passage is in the indirect narration, and before each sentence the words 'The villagers said that' should be understood.

2-4. *When . . . effect*: (the villagers said that) when Dr. Kimble prescribed remedies, it was only to be expected that they would produce some result.

4-5. *who came . . . where*: who came from an unknown place.

5-6. *worked wonders . . . waters*: accomplished a wonderful cure with, &c.

6. *the occult . . . process*: the mysterious nature of the proceeding.

7-8. *Wise Woman*: witch.

10. *fits*: convulsions.

12. *a fine sight more*: colloquial for 'very much more'.

16. *the while*: i.e. while she uttered the words.

*it would . . . head*: it would prevent water on the brain.



20-1. *Silas Marner . . . more*: in all probability Silas Marner was even more skilful in the use of charms and incantations than the witch of Tarley.

21-3. *and now . . . 'comical-looking'*: and now the mystery of his strange appearance and of his arrival from an unknown district was explained.

24. *mind . . . doctor*: must be careful not to tell the doctor.

25. *to set his face against*: to take a dislike to.

30. *beset*: besieged, surrounded.

31. *(w)hooping-cough*: a convulsive, infectious cough, so named from the peculiar 'whoop' or cry that accompanies it.

*bring . . . milk*: restore to mothers the power of suckling their babies.

32. *stuff . . . rheumatics*: a cure for rheumatism.

*knots*: chalk-stones.

34. *silver . . . palms*: silver coins in their hands.

35. *Silas . . . trade*: Silas might have carried on a lucrative business.

36. *as well as . . . drugs*: in addition to selling the few medicines with the preparation of which he was acquainted.

36-7. *on this condition*: obtained in this way.

37-8. *he had never . . . falsity*: he had never felt a temptation to be dishonest.

40. *wise man*: wizard.

PAGE 18. 2-3. *But the hope . . . dread*: but the expectation of reaping some benefit from his supposed magic powers at last gave place to fear.

6-8. *set . . . glances*: attributed the bad luck to Silas Marner's anger and evil looks.

8-12. *Thus it came to pass . . . complete*: so it happened that his feeling of pity for Sally Oates, which had inspired in him a passing emotion of sympathy for his fellow men, increased the ill-will between himself and his neighbours, and made him more lonely than before.

13. *guineas*: an English gold coin worth twenty-one shillings.

*crown*: a silver coin, value five shillings.

14-15. *drew . . . wants*: spent less and less on his own needs.

15-17. *trying . . . possible*: seeking to discover the smallest possible expenditure on which he would be able to maintain his strength so as to do sixteen hours' work a day.

/ 17-22. *Have not . . . purpose?*: we know that men who have been punished by close confinement in prison have amused themselves by making each second a straight line of a certain length on the wall, arranging these straight lines in triangles, until this pursuit has become an object of overwhelming desire with them.

\* 22-5. *Do we . . . habit*: do we not pass vacant moments or weary periods of waiting in the repetition of some useless movement or sound, till we feel the need of it, and thus the beginning of a habit is formed?

27. *absorbing passion*: overwhelming desire.

27-9. *whose imaginations . . . beyond it*: who, even when they first began to accumulate money, could conceive of no way in which they would like to spend it.

29-30. *Marner . . . a square*: Marner wanted the coins to increase until he could arrange piles of ten coins in a square.

31-2. *and every . . . new desire*: and every guinea which he added to the pile not only gave pleasure in itself but increased his desire for more guineas.

32-8. In this unaccountable existence, which had become an insoluble puzzle to him, he might, if his character had been less emotional, have continued to weave, anticipating the completion of a design, or of a certain quantity of cloth, until he ceased to think of the puzzle of life, and forgot everything except his own passing bodily feelings.

39-19. 3. *He began . . . faces*: he began to imagine that his money, like his loom, was aware of his presence, and nothing would have induced him to exchange those coins which had become familiar to him for others with which he was not acquainted.

PAGE 19. 11-12. *presented itself*: occurred.

12. *hoarding*: accumulating money.

15. *to have their savings by them*: to keep the money which they had accumulated close at hand.

16. *flock beds*: beds stuffed with wool or woollen rags.

17-18. *in the days of King Alfred*: Freeman tells us that

in the reign of King Alfred golden bracelets might be hung up by the roadside and no one would dare to steal them.

18-19. *had not . . . burglary* : were not audacious enough to conceive the idea of a robbery.

20. *without betraying themselves* : without attracting suspicion.

21-2. *a course . . . journey* : a plan of action as doubtful and uncertain as a voyage in a balloon.

24. *rising* : increasing.

24-7. *and his life . . . being* : and his life growing more limited in its range and selfish, until it became a mere throb of desire for money and of satisfaction in obtaining it, without any thought of other people.

27-30. *His life . . . tended* : his life had simply become a process of weaving cloth and collecting money, with no ulterior object to which these processes of weaving and collecting might be directed.

30-4. *The same sort . . . theory* : men of more intelligence and education than Silas Marner have perhaps acted in a similar way, when they have lost faith in God and love for man, but instead of spinning cloth and accumulating money they have undertaken some learned inquiry, or devised some clever invention, or the explanation of some phenomenon supported by close reasoning.

34-9. *Strangely . . . apart* : the form and features of Silas Marner seemed to adapt themselves to his mode of living, so that, just as a handle or piece of bent pipe seems to have no meaning apart from the instrument or machine of which it forms a part, so the life of Silas Marner seemed to have no meaning apart from the processes of weaving and hoarding.

39-40. *that used . . . dreamy* : which had a vague but confiding expression.

40-20. 2 *now looked . . . everywhere* : now had a peering look as if they could only see one very small thing, for which they were searching everywhere.

PAGE 20. 3. *withered* : thin and wrinkled.

6-8. *Yet even . . . gone* : yet even in this process of moral and physical decay a little event happened which showed that his capacity for love was not quite extinct.

9. *a couple of fields off* : two fields away, at a distance measured by the length of two fields.

11. *a brown earthenware pot* : Hindustani, 'ghara.'

12. *utensil* : vessel used for domestic purposes.

*conveniences* : comforts.

13. *granted* : allowed.

15-16. *so that . . . helpfulness* : so that its appearance conveyed to him the idea of aid cheerfully given.

17-19. *and the impress . . . water* : and the feeling of its handle in his hand combined with the look of the clear sparkling water it contained to give him a feeling of pleasure.

20. *stumbled* : tripped.

*stile* : steps for climbing over the fence enclosing a field.

21. *that overarched* : which formed a bridge over.

26. *propped . . . memorial* : supported the broken pot in the spot in which it had always been placed, so that he might not forget the services it had rendered to him.

28. *The livelong day* : the whole day long.

29. *with its monotony* : with its unvaried sound.

30. *bent . . . on* : placed close to.

*the slow . . . web* : the gradual increase in the cloth woven of the same pattern, and of a light brown colour.

31-2. *with . . . repetition* : with such a uniformly similar motion.

32-3. *that their pause . . . breath* : that when he ceased working them he felt almost as uncomfortable as if he had ceased to breathe.

34. *shutters* (Hindustani, 'jhilmili') : outer wooden frame to protect a window.

38-9. *which wasted . . . corner* : which economized space by adapting themselves to the shape of the hole in which they were placed.

PAGE 21. 1-2. *The silver . . . gold* : the number of silver coins was small as compared with the number of gold pieces.

4-5. *his own . . . wants* : his daily needs, e.g. food and clothing.

8-9. *begotten by* : the produce of.

10. *bathed* : plunged.

11. *in regular piles* : in little columns of equal height.

12. *outline* : circumference.

13-14. *only half-earned* : not yet fully earned.

16. *through . . . years* : in the future.

17. *which spread . . . him* : which stretched out in front of him.

17-18. *the end . . . weaving* : with nothing to look forward to but continuous weaving.

18. *No wonder* : it is not surprising that.

19. *with* : busy with, intent upon.

21. *his work* : the thread which he wove into cloth.

21-3. *his steps . . . herbs* : he never turned from the path to the lines of bushes growing by the roadside, or to the steep banks of a country lane, sunk below the level of the surrounding country, to look for those medicinal plants which once he knew so well.

24. *from which . . . away* : from which his present mode of life had departed.

24-7. *like a rivulet . . . sand* : like a brook which has receded to a great distance from the green banks it formerly filled, and has become a little wandering stream cutting a channel for itself in the sterile sand.

28. *of that fifteenth year* : i.e. the fifteenth year of Marner's residence in Raveloc.

29. *a second great change* : what was the first great change ?

29-31. *and his history . . . neighbours* : and his life became connected in a remarkable way with that of the villagers in the neighbourhood.

### CHAPTER III.

SUMMARY.—Squire Cass was the leading man in Raveloc by virtue of the fact that he was not only a landowner but a landlord, i.e. he had tenants. In spite of bad cultivation Raveloc was a prosperous village where people lived a comfortable life, where the rich entertained their neighbours sumptuously and the poor enjoyed the remnants of the feast. Squire Cass's wife had been long dead, and there was a lack of refinement about his house due to the absence of a woman's influence in the home. His second son, Dunstan, was a sneering, malicious fellow, fond of gambling and of getting the best of a bargain. The eldest son, Godfrey Cass, was a handsome, frank,

pleasant young man ; but lately he had lost some of the freshness of his complexion, and the neighbours shook their heads and wondered why a marriage was not arranged between him and Miss Nancy Lammeter, for whom he was known to entertain no little affection.

On a certain November afternoon Godfrey was visited at his own request by his brother Dunstan on an important matter. The fact was that a tenant of Squire Cass, named Fowler, had paid a hundred pounds rent to Godfrey, expecting that Godfrey would hand over the money to his father. But Godfrey had given the money to Dunstan, owing to the latter's threat that he would otherwise reveal to the Squire the secret of Godfrey's marriage with a low woman, named Molly Farren. Now Squire Cass, supposing that Fowler had not paid the money, was threatening to take legal proceedings against him, and Godfrey was in a difficulty. Dunstan refused to return the money, and persuaded Godfrey to try to get it by entrusting his horse (Wildfire) to him (Dunstan) to sell at the hunt. Godfrey did not wish to go to the hunt himself because he was desirous of meeting Nancy Lammeter at a dance, to be given by Mrs. Osgood, although he well knew that, being a married man, there was no advantage to be gained by seeing her.

32. *The greatest man* : the man of the highest social position.

33. *flight* : series of steps one above the other.

PAGE 22. 1. *landed parishioners* : landowners in the district.

3. *timeless origin* : very ancient lineage.

3-5. *the Raveloe . . . Osgoods* : the people of Raveloe never having dared to conceive of a period so terribly empty as to contain no Osgoods.

7-8. *who complained . . . lord* : who complained to him of the damage done to the crops by birds and animals hunted for sport and protected by law, just as if he had been a peer.

9. *glorious war-time* : owing to the Napoleonic wars in Europe there was but little competition from abroad with English grain, and the farmers were consequently prosperous.

9-11. *which . . . interest* : which was regarded as a period

during which the special favour of God was shown towards landowners.

11-14. *to carry . . . wheels* : with the effect of ruining the small landowners and farmers, for which ruin their own bad cultivation and thriftless habits had prepared them.

16-21. *for our old-fashioned . . . results* : for English rural existence in the old days appeared under many different forms, as must be the case with all life which covers a wide and varied area, and is subject to many different influences, climatic and human, which act and react upon one another in a very complex manner.

22. *lay* : was situated.

*rutted lanes* : narrow country roads which bore the deep impress of cart-wheels.

23. *aloof . . . earnestness* : far from the stream of trade and commerce and manufacture, and from that fanatical religious feeling which is characteristic of certain Dissenting sects.

24-6. *accepted gout . . . families* : regarded gout and apoplexy as mysterious diseases which were found in families of high social position.

25. *gout* : a disease of the joints.

*apoplexy* : a fit caused by brain disease.

27. *entirely . . . of it* : quite right.

*to lead . . . life* : to be merry and gay.

28. *multiplication of orts* : large quantity of scraps or leavings.

29. *heirlooms* : the recognized inheritance, or property.

30. *scented* : perceived by means of their smell.

*hams* : dried and salted thighs of hogs.

30-2. *but her longing . . . boiled* : but her desire to partake of them was checked by the gift of the oily water in which they had been boiled.

32-3. *and when the seasons . . . merrymakings* : and when the great church festivals came in due course.

33. *on all hands* : by everybody.

34. *a fine thing* : very beneficial.

35. *rounds* : circular pieces.

*barrels of ale* : casks of beer.

36. *on a large scale* : provided for the entertainment of many guests.

37-8. *packed up in bandboxes* : put away in slight boxes made of cardboard.

38. *gowns* : dresses.

*top-knots* : head-dresses.

39. *incurred the risk* : ran the danger.

*fording* : crossing.

*pillions* : cushions placed on the back of a horse behind the rider for a woman to sit upon.

40. *precious burden* : the handbox.

PAGE 23. 1. *there was no knowing* : it was impossible to tell.

2-3. *they looked . . . pleasure* : they anticipated enjoying themselves for a short time only.

3. *On this ground* : for this reason.

3-4. *contrived* : arranged.

4. *in the dark seasons* : in the winter, when the days are short and gloomy.

5. *hours were long* : nights were long.

6. *should . . . succession* : should one after the other entertain all their friends.

6-9. *When Squire Cass's . . . village* : when the customary articles of food at the house of Squire Cass became less in amount and somewhat stale, it was only necessary for his guests to walk a little further up the main street of the village.

10. *chines* : backs of hogs.

11. *pork-pies* : pies of pastry and pig's flesh out up fine, with the scent . . . *them* : still smelling of the fire at which they had been baked, fresh from the oven.

*spun* : refined.

12-13. *that appetites . . . desire* : that people could wish for, who had plenty of time to eat.

13. *in . . . perfection* : of perhaps better quality.

17-18. *which is the fountain . . . kitchen* : which is the source of pure affection in the family, and inspires a necessary fear of wrongdoing among the servants.

18-20. *and this helped . . . provisions* : and this was partly the reason why the quantity of food was superior to the quality on festive occasions.

20-3. *but also . . . wainscot* : also it explained the number of times the haughty Squire preferred to sit in the company of his social inferiors at the Rainbow Inn instead of in his own gloomy parlour.

23. *wainscot* : panelling on the wall of a room, here used for the room itself.



24. *had . . . ill*: had not proved very good or successful young men.

25. *Raveloe . . . severe*: the standard of moral conduct was not very high at Raveloe.

26-7. *but it . . . idleness*: but the Squire was considered lacking in firmness or strength of purpose in allowing his sons to remain in the village without any employment or occupation.

27-33. *and though . . . wild oats*: and although the villagers were willing to make some concession in the case of the sons of wealthy farmers, they disapproved of the behaviour of the second son of Squire Cass, because they considered that his love of gambling and making profitable exchanges might result in something more serious than the ordinary faults of youth.

33. *wild oats*: to 'sow one's wild oats' means to act foolishly and extravagantly in the days of one's youth.

34. *became of*: happened to.

34-5. *a spiteful jeering fellow*: a malicious, sneering creature.

35-6. *who seemed . . . dry*: who seemed to enjoy his own pleasure more when other people were miserable.

38. *tankards*: drinking-vessels.

39. The words 'The neighbours said' should be understood before this and every remaining sentence in the paragraph, the remainder of which is in the indirect narration.

*it would be . . . pities*: it would be most unfortunate.

40. *fine*: handsome.

*open-faced*: frank-looking.

PAGE 24. 1. *who . . . land*: who would inherit the property.

2. *should . . . as*: should begin to follow the example of.

3. *as . . . late*: as he had lately appeared inclined to do.

3-4. *If he . . . way*: if he continued in that course of action.

4. *he would lose*: he would not succeed in marrying.

5-8. *she had looked . . . together*: she had treated him with great reserve during the year which followed the last Whitsuntide festival, when there was so much talk about Godfrey absenting himself from home for several days in succession.

6. *Whitsuntide*: the week which begins with Whitsunday, the seventh Sunday after Easter.

9. *common* : ordinary.

10. *fresh-coloured and open* : ruddy and frank.

11-13. *what a . . . make* : what a good-looking married pair he and Miss Nancy Lammeter would be.

13-14. *mistress . . . House* : as wife of Godfrey Cass.

14. *fine change* : great improvement.

15. *had . . . way* : had been so trained or educated.

16. *pinch* : as much as could be held between the thumb and first finger.

17. *had . . . place* : enjoyed to the full those comforts and luxuries which belonged to their rank in life.

18-19. *would . . . Squire* : would enable the old Squire to economize.

19. *if she . . . fortune* : even if she had no dowry.

20-1. *notwithstanding his incomings* : in spite of his income.

21-2. *there were . . . hand in* : others besides himself enjoyed his wealth, i.e. he was surrounded by people who succeeded in depriving him of his money.

23. *didn't . . . leaf* : did not change his mode of life.

23-4. *he might say . . . Lammeter* : he might say farewell to, that is, he might lose or never be able to marry Miss Nancy Lammeter.

27. *wainscoted* : having the walls covered up to a certain height with panels of wood.

27-8. *one late November afternoon* : towards evening in the month of November.

29. *The fading grey light* : the twilight.

*fell dimly* : cast a faint radiance.

30. *brushes* : tails.

31. *flung* : thrown carelessly.

31-2. *sending . . . ale* : giving out a smelt of stale beer.

32. *half-choked* : half-extinguished.

33. *propped . . . chimney-corners* : leaning against the wall in the corners next to the fireplace.

33-6. *signs . . . accordance* : evidence of a home life without any good influence, sadly harmonizing with the depressed and irritated expression on Godfrey's ruddy countenance.

PAGE 25. 1. *thick-set* : compactly built.

2-4. *gratuitously . . . intoxication* : the unreasonably joyful demeanour which indicates that a man is beginning to show the effects of excessive drinking.

5-6. *parted . . . hatred* : the look of sadness on Godfrey's face changed to one of actual loathing.

7. *spaniel* : a species of dog, with large hanging ears, supposed to be of Spanish origin.

*on the hearth* : in front of the fire.

9. *what do . . . me?* : what is your business with me?

10-11. *You're . . . betters* : you are my elder brother and superior to me.

13-14. *and just . . . listen* : pull yourself together, clear your brain from the effects of the intoxicants you have been drinking, and attend to what I am saying.

16. *to turn . . . anger* : to change his depression into reckless fury.

17-18. *that rent of Fowler's* : Fowler, a tenant of Squire Cass, had paid his rent to Godfrey, who under Dunstan's threats to reveal the secret of his marriage with the barmaid, Molly Farren, had given the money to him. He now requests Dunstan to return the money so that he may give it to his father, the Squire.

19. *he's . . . it* : the Squire says that he will seize Fowler's goods in payment of the rent.

19-20. *it'll . . . soon* : everything will be discovered.

20. *He* : the Squire.

21. *went out* : left the house.

*send word* : send a message.

*Cox* : the Squire's agent.

22. *arrears* : the rent he owed.

23. *short o' cash* : in need of ready money.

23-4. *in no humour . . . nonsense* :—not in the mood to allow any tricks to be played upon him.

25. *making away with* : misappropriating.

26. *pretty* : rather.

31-3. 'Since you were so kind as to give me the money, you will also be kind enough to repay it for me, since it was brotherly love that induced you to give it to me.' This is in mocking reference to the fact that Godfrey had given his father's money to Dunstan to shut his mouth, so that he might not reveal the secret of his (Godfrey's) foolish marriage.

34. *clenched* : shook.

35. *with that look* : with that expression on your face.

36-7. *turning . . . however* : retreating a little, nevertheless.

- ✓ 39. *cut off . . . day* : cause you to be turned out of the house in a penniless state, with next to no money.  
 40. *his handsome son* : in sneering reference to Godfrey's good looks.

PAGE 26. 1. *nice* : agreeable, dainty (used ironically).

3-4. *and I should slip . . . could be* : and I should occupy your place without the least difficulty.

4. *I don't do it* : I do not tell the Squire of your marriage.

5. *easy and good-natured* : affable and kind-hearted.

5-6. *You'll . . . me* : you will be willing to do anything for me.

6. 'You will find some way of paying the Squire the hundred pounds (Fowler's rent) which you have given to me.'

8. *quivering* : shaking with emotion.

9. *to bless myself with* : to call my own.

10. *it's a lie . . . place* : it is untrue that you would take my place if you were to reveal the secret of my marriage to our father.

10-11. *you'd . . . that's all* : the only result of your doing that would be that you would cause yourself to be expelled.

11-12. *For if . . . follow* : if you make reports to my father against me, I can do the same against you.

12. *Bob* : short for Robert.

13-14. *He'd only . . . you* : my father would be very glad to do without you.

✓ 15. *nodding . . . sideways* : jerking his head in a cunning or knowing manner.

21. *moving off* : going away.

27. *of* : from.

• *Kimble* : Mr. Kimble was the village doctor. He was married to Squire Cass's sister.

30. *Wildfire* : Godfrey's horse.

31. *that's . . . talking* : it is easy to say that.

32. *directly* : at once.

33. *you've only got to* : it will only be necessary to.  
*the hunt* : the fox hunt.

34. *There'll be . . . for sure* : Bryce and Keating are certain to be there.

*Bryce and Keating* : farmers.

35. *bids* : offers.

37. *splashed . . . chin* : covered with mud from head to foot.

40. *trying . . . trble* : affecting to speak in a weak, shrill voice.

PAGE 27. 1. *we* : Dunstan sarcastically pretends to put himself in Godfrey's place, hence 'we' means 'you' here.

2. *to be naughty again* : to misbehave in future.

3. *taken into favour* : forgiven.

4. *Hold your tongue* : be silent.

5. *turning red* : flushing.

*throttle* : choke.

6. *What for ?* : why, for what reason ?

*artificial* : affected.

7-8. *beating . . . palm* : striking the thick end of it upon his hand.

9. *to creep . . . again* : to seek to gain her favour again.

9-10. *it 'ud . . . time* : it would save you trouble in the future.

10. *a drop* : a little.

11. *laudanum* : Hindustani, 'äimäl.'

*make a widower of you* : die.

12. *being a second* : becoming your second wife.

12-13. *she didn't . . . it* : if she didn't know that you had already been married once.

13-15. Dunstan hints that if Molly dies and Godfrey marries Nancy Lammeter, he (Dunstan) will say nothing about the marriage with Molly, if he is bribed to be silent by Godfrey.

18. *If you'd . . . you* : if you were a little more intelligent.

19-20. *you may urge . . . another* : one may push an advantage over another man to such lengths that he may be driven to extremities, and become as willing to take one desperate course of action as another.

20-1. *I don't . . . now* : I am not sure that that is not the case already.

21. *I may as well tell* : I shall not lose anything by telling.

22. *I should . . . else* : at any rate I should have nothing further to fear from you.

23. *after . . . time* : in any case he must know of my marriage with Molly some time or other.

24-5. *don't flutter . . . ask* : do not imagine you can get any price you wish in return for keeping silence.

26-7. *You drain . . . her with* : you exhaust my means until I have no money left to satisfy my wife with.

27. *she'll do as she threatens* : she will carry out her threat to reveal the secret of our marriage to my father.

27-8. *It's all one* : the result will be the same in any case.

30. *overshot his mark* : gone too far.

33. *air of unconcern* : affectation of indifference.

34. *draught of ale* : drink of beer.

35. *he threw . . . chairs* : he flung himself into one chair, and put his feet across another.

36. *rap* : strike.

40-28. 1. *muscular frame* : strong body.

PAGE 28. 1. *animal courage* : physical courage.

1-2. *helped . . . decision* : did not enable him to make up his mind.

3. *throttled* : choked, seized by the throat and squeezed.

4-10. *His natural . . . present evil* : his characteristic inability to come to a decision, and his lack of the courage necessary to do what is right regardless of consequences, were increased by a situation in which terrible results seemed to threaten him whatever course of action he adopted, and no sooner had his anger induced him to bid defiance to Dunstan and to face any revelation which he might make to his father, than the sad consequences of such a course seemed more painful to him than the misery he was then enduring.

10-12. *The results . . . certain* : if he were to confess his marriage to his father, he was sure to be turned out ; while it was just possible that Dunstan would not disclose his secret.

12-14. *From the near . . . repose* : he recoiled from the immediate prospect of certain expulsion, and returned to his former state of hesitation and indecision with a sense of relief.

17. *by the favour of earth and sky* : owing to good soil, sunshine, and rain.

17-18. *has . . . bulk* : has become tall and beautiful.

18. *where . . . upward* : where it first appeared above the ground.

18-21. *Perhaps . . . terms* : he might have been willing to face with some equanimity the prospect of becoming a mere agricultural labourer (which would have been the result of his confessing his marriage to his father), if he could thus have secured Nancy Lammeter.

21. *irrevocably* : inevitably.

21-7. *but, since he . . . families* : by confessing his marriage he would be disinherited, and would lose all chance of ever marrying Nancy Lammeter; he would sever all his former connexions except the bond of marriage, which dragged him down and deprived him of all incentive to regain his former position. And the only alternative to confession he could think of was to enlist as a soldier—a measure which people of repute considered only one degree better than committing suicide.

28-32. *he would . . . pleasure left* : he would rely upon chance rather than his own decision; he would go on enjoying himself, following the desire of his heart, though in continual danger of discovery and oppressed by fear of betrayal, rather than sacrifice all happiness and be lost in the chill obscurity of the great world outside Raveloe.

32-5. *The utmost . . . threat* : he began to think that it would be easier to accept any suggestion of Dunstan's about selling the horse than to carry out his own menace and reveal the facts to his father.

35-7. *But his pride . . . quarrel* : but he was too proud to negotiate with Dunstan except under the pretence of renewing the dispute.

37. *waiting for* : expecting.

37-8. *and took his . . . usual* : and began to drink his beer in smaller quantities.

39. *It's just like you* : it is characteristic of you.

40-29. 1. *cool way* : careless manner.

PAGE 29. 1. *the last . . . own* : the last of my possessions.

2. *best . . . horse-flesh* : finest horse.

✓ 3. *a spark of pride* : the least regard for the reputation of your family.

✓ 5-7. I believe you would sell yourself simply for the satisfaction of cheating somebody.

8. *placably* : calmly.

8-9. *you do . . . justice* : you recognize my ability.

9-10. *You know . . . bargains* : you know I am very clever at persuading people to buy articles at more than their real value.

13. *they'll bid for* : they will offer sums of money for.

15. *Yes . . . you* : I have no doubt you *would* sell my horse for me, but do not think I would be so foolish as to trust you with him.

17. *unconcern* : indifference.

18-19. *it's none . . . business* : it's no affair of mine, it does not concern me.

21. *I'd . . . that* : I was not concerned in your misappropriating the money.

21-2. *you chose . . . me* : you elected to be so kind as to give it to me.

23. *it's . . . me* : it makes no difference to me.

24. *accommodate* : help.

25. *seeing* : since.

27-9. *He would have liked . . . life* : he felt a desire to leap upon Dunstan, snatch the whip from his hand, and beat him almost to death.

30. *bodily* : physical.

*deterred* : prevented.

31-2. *which was fed . . . resentment* : which was inspired by emotions even stronger than his anger.

33. *half . . . tone* : almost propitiatory tone.

34. *you mean . . . horse* : you do not intend to play me any trick in the matter of selling the horse.

35. *all fair* : quite honestly.

36. *everything . . . smash* : all will be ruined.

37. *I've got . . . to* : I have no means of getting the money other than by the sale of Wildfire.

37-9. *And you'll . . . too* : and it will be less pleasant for you to ruin me, when your own ruin will be involved in mine.

40. *Aye, aye* : yes, yes.

PAGE 30. 1. *you'd come round* : I thought you would end by agreeing with me.

1-2. *I'm . . . scratch* : I'm the man to make old Mr. Bryce amenable.

2. *a hundred and twenty* : pounds.

4. *cats and dogs* : in torrents, very heavily.



6. *obstacle* : hindrance, i. e. the rain.

8. *Not it* : it will not rain.

10. *You never hold trumps* : you never hold winning cards, you are never lucky.

12. *for your crooked sixpence* : i. e. for luck.

13. *get along . . . me* : succeed without my help.

15. *take care . . . sober* : be careful not to become intoxicated.

16. *else . . . pitched* : otherwise you will be thrown.

17. *might . . . it* : might suffer by it.

18. *Make . . . easy* : take comfort to your kindly heart (ironically).

19. *see double* : to be intoxicated.

19-20. *when I'd . . . make* : when I wanted to buy or sell anything at a profit.

20. *it 'ud spoil the fun* : it would destroy the pleasure.

21. *I'm . . . legs* : I am sure to alight on my feet, I never hurt myself.

22. *slammed* : banged, closed with unnecessary force.

23-4. *bitter rumination . . . circumstances* : sad reflection on his private affairs.

24-5. *unbroken . . . day* : never interrupted.

25. *sporting* : taking part in out-of-door games.

26. *oblivious* : causing forgetfulness. Seeing Nancy Lammeter made him reflect that he could not marry her, since he was already married, and so reminded him of his troubles.

27-33. *The subtle . . . discontents* : the man who has received a better education than others, and is therefore more refined, is also more sensitive than others, and experiences various sorrows hard to define, from which they are exempt. He is to be pitied. But more to be pitied is the less highly educated man, who has no joys or interests outside himself, and is always brooding over his own sorrows and grievances.

33-9. *The lives . . . nevertheless* : the interest of pity attaches to the lives of our country ancestors, whom we are inclined to consider very dull and uninteresting because they had nothing to do except to ride round their own fields, becoming stouter and heavier as they grew older, and passing the remainder of their lives in the careless satisfaction of appetites which had become jaded through indulgence.

39-40. *their . . . consequences*: the mistakes of their youth were severely punished.

40-31. 4. *perhaps the . . . rioting*: perhaps the love of some beautiful girl, the perfection of modesty, neatness, and tranquillity, had afforded to them the prospect of an existence which would not be dull, although free from agitation and disturbance.

PAGE 31. 4-5. *and the vision passed away*: their hopes of a calm and happy life in her company disappeared.

7. *furrows*: ploughed fields.

8-11. *so that they . . . twelvemonth*: so that in the dullness caused by drink they might not feel any necessity to find something new to say, and might repeat with great earnestness things they had been constantly saying for a year or more.

11-14. *Assuredly . . . brutality*: certainly among those farmers, whose faces were red with drinking, and whose eyes had a vacant look, there were some who, owing to their natural kindness of heart, could never become unfeeling, even when riotous.

14-18. *men who . . . them*: men who in the bloom of youth had experienced the bitterness of grief and regret, had been betrayed by their friends, or had carelessly contracted unfortunate marriage bonds, from which they would never be free.

19-21. *their thoughts . . . history*: they could think of nothing else but the constantly recurring memories of their own sad though commonplace experiences.

23-7. *A movement . . . life*: pity and that subtle tie which binds a sensitive man to his mistress, however little he may love or respect her, had led him to contract a secret marriage, which had ruined his life.

27. *an ugly story*: a painful history.

27-8. *low passion*: vulgar lust.

28. *delusion . . . delusion*: self-deception and disillusion.

28-30. *which . . . memory*: the details of which need not be related—Godfrey may be left to meditate sadly upon them in private.

30-1. *the delusion . . . Dunstan*: that his mistake was partly the result of the artful schemes of Dunstan.

31-3. *who saw . . . cupidity*: who hoped to satisfy his

own avarice and malice by inducing his brother to disgrace himself by this marriage.

33-6. *And if Godfrey . . . intolerably* : and if Godfrey could have felt that he was the innocent victim of Dunstan's intrigues, the cruel fate which had befallen him would have troubled him less.

36-9. *If the curses . . . avowal* : the whispered curses he uttered when alone were the result of his perception of his own folly as well as of the devilish craft of Dunstan. Had he not felt himself to blame also, he would have hesitated less to reveal the facts of the case to his father.

PAGE 32. 1. *mad and unaccountable* : foolish and inexplicable.

2-3. *when their . . . passed away* : when they have long ceased to tempt us ; when they are no longer objects of desire.

4. *wooed her* : made love to her.

4-5. *tacit, patient worship* : silent, persistent adoration.

8-10. *to shake off . . . vacancy* : to give up those vicious and dissipated habits which afforded no real pleasure, but were only a means of relieving dullness by excitement.

11. *essentially domestic* : really home-loving.

11-14. *bred up . . . order* : although he had been brought up in a home without happiness, where there was no discipline to make the habits of the children orderly and regular.

14-15. *his easy . . . courses* : his pliant nature made him acquiesce in the family habits and customs.

15-23. *but the need . . . peace* : but he felt that he needed some one to love him truly and tenderly ; he desired to be good, and he wanted some one to make it easy for him to be good. Under the influence of these feelings he was much attracted by the cleanliness, innocence, and regularity, combined with comfort, of Mr. Lammeter's home, which, when brightened by the happy presence of Nancy, made him think of the early hours of a fine morning, when we feel no temptation to evil and yield to our good impulses, which invite us to seek the repose of mind which is the result of steady daily toil.

23-5. *And yet . . . for ever* : and yet the hope of such happiness had not been able to deter him from a course of action which prevented him from ever attaining it.

25-30. *Instead . . . struggle*: instead of being led by the powerful yet gentle influence of Nancy to a life of happiness and goodness, he had allowed himself to fall under evil influences from which it was impossible to extricate himself.

30-2. *He had made ties . . . exasperation*: he had contracted a matrimonial alliance which deprived him of all healthy action, and was a continual source of irritation.

35-33. 3. *and the desire . . . Nancy Lammeter*: and he desired more than anything else to postpone the fatal hour when he would have to face his father's furious anger at the injury done to the family honour—would perhaps have to say good-bye to that inherited comfort and respectability which, when all was said and done, sufficed to make life endurable; and, when that happened, he might be sure that he would lose the respect of Nancy, and would never be allowed to see her again.

PAGE 33. 3-9. *The longer . . . lingering regard*: the longer the period that elapsed before his father became acquainted with his marriage, the more hope there was of being saved from some of the terrible results he had incurred, and the greater was the chance of enjoying the great though unreasoning pleasure of gazing upon Nancy, and of inferring from her behaviour that she still had some slight affection for him.

9-13. *Towards . . . galling*: sometimes, at irregular intervals, he could not resist the desire to see Nancy again after having kept out of her way for some time, regarding her as a distant fairy, the sight of whom filled him with desire and at the same time tormented him with the thought that he could never possess her.

13-14. *One . . . now*: he was in one of these recurring periods of desire (to see Nancy).

14-18. *and it would have been . . . morrow's hunt*: and this desire would have been strong enough to induce him to give Wildfire to Dunstan to sell, rather than sell it himself, even if he had no other reason for keeping away from the next day's hunt.

19. *morning's meet*: the place where the hounds and huntsmen would assemble in the morning.

21-3. *whose image . . . haunted by her*: the thought of whom became more hateful to him every day, so that to his excited imagination the whole neighbourhood of Batherley seemed to be frequented by her.

23-8. *The yoke . . . home*: however naturally kind-hearted a man may be, the trouble which he brings upon himself by his own evil actions will arouse hatred in his heart; and the good-natured and kind-hearted Godfrey Cass was rapidly becoming a cruel man, influenced by vindictive thoughts, which seemed to come and go, and come again, like devils which had found in his heart a ready furnished abode.

32-3. *Though . . . cock-fighting*: although, as regards himself, he did not care a straw about cock-fighting.

39-40. *perhaps . . . her*: perhaps because she saw no other alternative, no other course open to her.

#### CHAPTER IV.

SUMMARY.—Dunstan Cass started for the hunt, and when he passed on his way the stone pits and the dwelling of Silas Marner, he wondered why he had never suggested to Godfrey to borrow money from the weaver. When he arrived at the meet he told the farmers there that Wildfire belonged to him, but, knowing his character, they quite understood that he was selling the animal on behalf of Godfrey, and agreed to pay him a hundred and twenty guineas for the horse, delivered in good condition at the stables. Dunstan, intending to enjoy one more gallop before selling the horse, took part in the day's hunting, but Wildfire fell and was killed in trying to jump a fence, and Dunstan set out to walk back to Raveloe through the mist and rain. When he came to the stone pits again he went up to the cottage of Silas Marner, intending to persuade or frighten the miser into lending his money. He found the door unlocked, the key being used as part of a contrivance for hanging some meat before the fire. Silas Marner was not in the cottage. Dunstan now yielded to the temptation to steal the money, and having found the place where it was concealed, he took the bags of money in his hands and ran out into the darkness.

PAGE 34. 1. *setting . . . morning*: starting in the cold and misty morning.

1-3. *at the judiciously . . . hunter*: proceeding carefully and slowly, as a man must do who has to ride to the meet on the same horse as he intends to ride during the hunt.

3. *had . . . way*: found it necessary to go.

4-5. *which . . . ground* : which at the other end passed a piece of unfenced land.

8-10. *with the moist . . . quarry* : surrounded by wet mud which bore the impress of feet, and with dirty red water high up in the lonely stone pit.

12. *whose loom . . . already* : the noise of whose weaving machine he could already hear.

14-15. *who had . . . miserliness* : who had often heard Marner's mean economies spoken about.

17. *into lending* : until he was willing, or consented to lend.

17-18. *on the excellent . . . prospects* : on the assurance that he would be repaid with interest when the young squire—Godfrey Cass—succeeded to his father's property.

18-19. *the resource . . . agreeable* : it seemed such an easy and pleasant opportunity.

22. *accommodate* : oblige, (here) to lend money to.

*faithful* : used ironically.

25. *the suggestion* : i.e. to borrow money from Marner.

25-6. *He would snatch . . . Wildfire* : he would very willingly accept any proposal which would have the effect of removing the necessity for selling Wildfire.

27-8. *But when . . . prevailed* : but at this stage in Dunstan's thoughts he yielded to an overwhelming desire to continue his journey instead of returning to Raveloe.

29. *that pleasure* : i.e. the pleasure of getting the money he needed without having to sell Wildfire.

31-2. *enjoyed . . . sell* : liked to occupy the proud position of offering a horse for sale.

32. *opportunity of driving a bargain* : chance of making a handsome profit.

33. *swaggering . . . in* : using boastful language and perhaps succeeding in deceiving the purchaser.

34. *attendant on* : connected with.

35. *not the less* : also.

36. *setting* : persuading, inducing.

37. *cover* : the retreat of a fox, near which the huntsmen and hounds assembled.

PAGE 35. 3-4. *who . . . Wildfire* : who had long admired and wished to purchase Wildfire.

6. *swopped* : exchanged (horses).

7. *grandly . . . utility* : sublimely indifferent to any

consideration of personal advantage. (He loved lying for its own sake, whether the lie benefited him or not.)

7-9. *was not . . . him*: was not decreased by the probability that his statement would not be believed.

10-11. *big-boned hack*: raw-boned nag.

13. *there was . . . between us*: there was a small debt which Godfrey owed to me.

14. *Wildfire made it even*: the debt was settled by my getting Wildfire in exchange for my horse.

15. *accommodated him*: obliged him.

16. *got an itch for*: (colloquial) had a strong desire to possess.

17-18. *as rare a bit . . . across*: as valuable a specimen of a well-bred horse as you ever mounted.

19. *I'd a bid of*: I was offered the sum of.

21. *cast*: squint.

22. *I mean to stick to*: I shall keep.

23. *I shan't . . . hurry*: it will take me a long time to obtain a horse better able to jump a fence than Wildfire.

24. *got more blood*: is better bred, has more spirit.

*a bit*: a little, somewhat.

26. *divined*: guessed.

27-9. *horse-dealing . . . manner*: there are many other human relations besides horse-dealing in which neither party reveals his real thoughts.

30. *was . . . stage*: had commenced.

32. *I . . . now*: now I am surprised to hear that.

36-7. *the transaction . . . complicated*: the bargaining became more complex.

PAGE 36. 4. *the inclination for a run*: the desire for a gallop.

5. *draught*: drink.

6. *pocket pistol*: flask.

*at the conclusion of the bargain*: after the sale of Wildfire had been agreed upon.

7-8. *with a horse under him*: when he was riding a horse.

8. *take the fences*: jump the fences.

8-9. *to the admiration of the field*: in such a way as to excite the wonder of the other huntsmen.

9-10. *jumped . . . many*: literally, jumped one fence more than he should have jumped, i.e. met with disaster at one fence.

10. *staked his horse*: the pointed posts of the fence pierced the body of the horse.

*ill-favoured*: ugly.

11. *quite unmarketable*: of no value at all.

12. *unconscious of his price*: unaware of his value.

13. *turned . . . flank*: rolled over on his side.

*panted . . . last*: breathed his last. died.

14. *having had . . . stirrup*: being obliged to dismount to adjust his stirrup. Hindustani, 'rikāb'.

17. *thrown . . . hunt*: caused him to fall behind the other huntsmen.

17-18. *near . . . glory*: just when he expected to distinguish himself.

18. *under this exasperation*: owing to this annoyance.

19. *more blindly*: more carelessly.

19-20. *He would soon . . . hounds again*: he would soon have caught up the hounds.

21. *in advance*: in front.

22. *troubling themselves*: caring.

23-5. *who were . . . fallen*: who in all probability would ride by a different route than that in which Wildfire had fallen.

25-6. *whose nature . . . consequences*: who was inclined to think more of present troubles than future eventualities.

27. *recovered his legs*: got on his feet.

27-8. *it was all over with Wildfire*: Wildfire was dead.

28-30. *he felt a satisfaction . . . enviable*: he felt glad that no one had seen an accident which no amount of boastful talk could represent in a favourable light.

30-2. *Reinforcing himself . . . coppice*: refreshing himself after his fall with a little brandy and many oaths and curses he walked as fast as possible to a thicket.

38. *out of the question*: impossible.

38-9. *spirited young men*: young bloods (ironical).

PAGE 37. 1. *to offer him the resource of Marner's money*: to suggest to him a way out of the difficulty, viz. to borrow money from Marner.

2. *kicked at the notion*: objected to the idea.

3. *he himself*: Godfrey.

4-5. *why . . . long*: he would soon overcome his objection.



5. *he could . . . anything* : he could goad Godfrey into doing anything he wished.

6-7. *kept . . . vividness* : became ever more insistent.

7. *immediate* : pressing.

8-9. *with . . . pedestrian* : walking with boots splashed with mud.

10. *encounter . . . stablemen* : endure the amused inquiries of the grooms.

10-12. *stood unpleasantly . . . plan* : interfered disagreeably with his desire to return to Raveloe in order to put his excellent idea into practice.

12-13. *a casual visitation of* : a chance examination of.

13. *ruminating* : meditating, considering what was to be done.

14-16. *the two or three . . . debt* : the few small silver coins his first finger touched in his pocket were insufficient to settle the small account.

17-18. *he would never . . . business* : i.e. he would never lend him another horse for hire.

18-21. *After all . . . Batherley* : in any case, considering the place in which he found himself after the hunt, he was almost the same distance from Raveloe as he was from Batherley.

21-2. *not . . . head* : who was not distinguished for great intelligence.

22-4. *was only led . . . home* : did not realize this until other considerations (i.e. rain and mist) forced him to see the necessity of getting home as soon as possible, even by the unusual method of walking.

27. *finger post* : sign post pointing to Raveloe.

28. *broke down* : fell.

30. *compactly* : tightly.

*rapping* : striking.

31. *with . . . air* : in an assured manner.

32. *taken by surprise* : astonished at what had happened.

32-3. *he set off* : he started.

33. *sense* : feeling.

35. *dress up and magnify* : misrepresent and exaggerate.

36. *select circle* : chosen few.

*Rainbow* : the Raveloe inn of that name.

37-8. *reduced . . . locomotion* : compelled to adopt so unusual a mode of going from one place to another.

38-40. *a whip . . . position* : it is a good thing to hold a whip in the hand to prevent him from feeling an excessive degree of perplexity at his strange situation.

PAGE 38. 1. *gathering* : increasing.

2. *rapping . . . somewhere* : striking something with his whip.

9-10. *in whose . . . figure* : in whose opinion he would present a ridiculous appearance.

10. *is no screen* : affords no concealment.

12. *a soul* : a person, any one.

13. *he silently remarked* : he thought to himself.

15. *was more . . . desired* : afforded more concealment than he desired.

17. *ruts* : cart tracks.

20. *opening* : open space.

21. *break in the hedgerow* : gap in the hedge.

25-6. *in . . . continually* : always in his thoughts.

27. *cajoling* : coaxing, flattering.

28. *to part with . . . money* : to give up his money for the present.

29-30. *there must . . . cajolery* : he must support the coaxing with a little intimidation.

31-3. *his own . . . interest* : for his knowledge of arithmetic was not sufficient to give him any clear proof of the benefits of interest.

33. *security* : a guarantee (house, land, &c.) for the payment of debt. The security is forfeited if the debt is not paid within the period agreed upon by the contracting parties.

36. *operation . . . mind* : task of persuading the miser.

38. *had made . . . to* : was convinced of.

40. *chinks* : little holes.

*shutters* : Hindustani, 'jhilmili.'

*dialogue* : conversation.

PAGE 39. 2-3. *to make . . . forth with* : to make himself known to the weaver at once.

3-4. *There might . . . course* : more than one advantage might result from doing this.

5-6. *feeling his way* : guiding himself in the mist and darkness by touching the bushes on the roadside with his whip.

7-8. *the lane . . . slippery* : it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep his footing on the sliding mud.

7. *lane* : country road.

8-9. *He turned . . . bank*: he walked up the sloping ground away from the road.

21. *latch*: a wooden or iron catch of a door.

23. *fastened*: locked.

23-4. *double motion*: i.e. knocking and pushing his fingers through the latch-hole.

28. *inviting*: pleasant, tempting.

29. *brick hearth*: a flat surface of bricks in front of the fire.

32-3. *if it had . . . cooking*: if it had been more completely cooked.

34. *kettle*: a metal vessel for boiling water.

*kettle-hanger*: an appliance for suspending a kettle over a fire.

35. *primitive*: old-fashioned.

30. *jack*: a contrivance for turning a spit (an iron prong on which meat is roasted) in front of the fire.

*pork*: flesh of the pig.

39. *old staring simpleton*: old fool with the protruding eyes.

PAGE 40. 1. *mouldy bread*: bread covered with a minute fungus, caused by damp.

2. *to check his appetite*: to take away his desire for food.

4. *in . . . preparation*: in process of cooking.

7. *brief purpose*: object which it would not take long to accomplish.

9-10. *carrying . . . novelty*: putting entirely new thoughts into his head.

13-14. *He went . . . evidence*: he did not consider any longer the possibilities of detection and of proof of guilt in case he were to steal the money.

15. *now took . . . him*: so entirely preoccupied his mind.

17-20. *A dull mind . . . problematic*: when a stupid man has from an imagined fact drawn a conclusion favourable to a proposed course of action, he is apt to forget that the idea, on which he has built his hopes, may be quite unfounded. Thus Dunstan Cass, imagining Silas Marner to be dead, was encouraged to steal his money, quite forgetting the possibility that Marner might be alive after all.

21. *felon*: criminal.

23. *hoards*: hidden wealth.

*thatch*: a roof covered with straw.

16 25-6. *a train . . . cupidity* : thinking rapidly under the incentive of avarice.

27-8. *his eyes . . . floor* : he threw a hasty glance over the floor.

29. *were . . . sand* : could be seen under the sand scattered over them.

33. *a given space* : a particular part of the floor.

34. *treddles* : levers worked by the feet.

35. *darted . . . spot* : rushed to the place.

PAGE 41. 6-7. *he was . . . recognition* : he had not clearly realized.

9. *undefinable dread laying hold on him* : a vague fear taking possession of him.

13. *that he . . . light* : that he might prevent the light from shining out into the darkness.

14-15. *beyond . . . gleams* : out of reach of discovery from the light.

15. *shutter-chinks* : holes in the window covers.

16. *thicker* : heavier and denser.

17. *awkward walking* : difficult to walk.

18. *it was . . . do* : it taxed his powers to the utmost.

19. *along with* : as well as.

20. *he might . . . time* : there would be no need to hurry. He could go as slowly as he pleased.

## CHAPTER V.

SUMMARY.—While the events related in the last chapter were taking place Silas Marner had gone to the village to buy some grain. He had left the door of his house open, partly because he had no fear of theft, and partly because he needed the key in a rough mechanical arrangement for cooking some meat, which had been given to him by Miss Priscilla Lammeter. He anticipated on his return the double pleasure of eating the meat and counting his money. But when he removed the loose bricks from the hearth preparatory to taking out his money-bags, he was horrified to find that they had disappeared. At first he could not believe the evidence of his eyes. Then he feared that the money might have been removed by some malignant supernatural power, but finally he took refuge in the hope that one Jem Rodney, a poacher, might have

stolen the bags, because it would be possible to seize Jem and compel him to restore the money. In any case the first thing to do was to proclaim his loss, and, in order that he might do this, he went to the Rainbow Inn, whose richest customers—those who drank whisky and sat in the parlour—had gone to Mrs. Osgood's dance, leaving the remainder to sit in the kitchen and drink beer.

22. *turned his back on* : left.

24. *plodding* : walking slowly and wearily.

27-8. *free from . . . change* : having no fear of any sudden or alarming alteration in his circumstances.

28-31. *the sense . . . alarm* : the feeling of safety more often results from habit than reason, and therefore it often continues when circumstances have changed, and when there is cause to entertain fear.

31-6. *The lapse . . . imminent* : the period of time during which any particular misfortune has not taken place is, owing to long immunity, often stated as a reason why it should never occur, although the length of time during which it has not happened is the very reason why it should take place.

PAGE 42. 3. *the roof* : of the mine.

5. *retain . . . conception* : realize the possibility.

7. *monotonous* : unvaried.

13. *complacency* : satisfaction.

14. *savoury* : tasty.

19. *on occasion . . . this* : when he received a gift of this nature.

20. *indulged . . . with* : yielded to his desire for.

21. *his favourite meal* : the meal he enjoyed most.

22. *warmed* : rejoiced.

24. *ingeniously knotted* : cleverly tied.

26. *according to rule* : as was his custom.

27. *hanger* : i.e. kettle hanger. See p. 39, l. 34.

28. *twine* : cord, composed of two or more threads twisted together.

29. *indispensable* : urgently required, necessary.

*to his 'setting up'* : for him to fix, to arrange.

30. *It had . . . memory* : he had forgotten it.

31. *he had not had* : it had not been necessary for him, he had not needed.

33. *going on errands* : here means 'leaving the house to obtain necessary articles'.

*out of the question* : not to be considered for a moment.

34. *It was . . . into* : it was unpleasant to leave his house and go out into the mist.

34-5. *there were things . . . comfort* : e.g. his work and the opportunity of making money.

36-7. *arming himself* : providing himself.

39. *errand* : undertaking, business.

39-40. The door-key was part of his contrivance for cooking his supper, and so he had to leave the door unlocked.

PAGE 43. 1-2. *it was not worth . . . sacrifice* : he did not think the risk of theft great enough to make it advisable for him to lock the door, and so delay the cooking of his supper until after his return from buying the twine.

3. *on such . . . this* : on so wet and foggy a night.

4-5. *through . . . before* : during all the fifteen preceding years.

6-8. *they merely . . . anxiety* : they only explain the dimly-perceived ground for the absence of any fear on the part of Silas Marner.

13. *putting by his lantern* : putting his lantern in its place.

14-16. *so as to merge . . . nailed boots* : so that the impression made on the sand by his own nailed boots concealed the footprints of Dunstan.

17. *tending* : attending to the cooking of.

20. *strange straining eyes* : queer protruding eyes.

*meagre form* : shrunken figure, thin body.

26-7. *vice . . . others* : evil habit which could be described as actually harmful to others.

27-9. *The light of his faith . . . money* : no longer guided by any religious belief and with no one to love, he had devoted all his powers to what remained to him—his work and his money.

30-1. *they had . . . themselves* : they had reduced him to their own likeness : they had made him resemble themselves.

32. *wrought* : worked.

33-4. *and confirmed . . . response* : and increased his constant desire for the repetition of its accustomed sound.

35. *hung* : bent.

*grow* : increase.

35-6. *gathered . . . its own* : made him hard and selfish like itself.

40. *unwonted feast* : unaccustomed repast. He seldom enjoyed the luxury of roast meat.

PAGE 44. 1-2. *For joy . . . sort* : after dinner people drink wine, and so produce in themselves a feeling of exhilaration. Silas Marner had no wine, but the sight of his guineas rejoiced his heart more than the most precious wine could have done.

4-5. *without noticing . . . change* : without perceiving that some of it had already been swept away (by Dunstan).

6. *leap* : beat.

8-9. *to put an end to the terror* : to assure himself that his fears were groundless.

13. *shook . . . violently* : trembled so much.

14. *to steady himself* : to control himself.

17-18. *seeks . . . footing* : tries to preserve his balance for a moment.

18. *sliding* : slippery.

18-20. *by acting . . . despair* : by assuming that he might have put the gold somewhere else and, searching for it, postponed the feeling of utter hopelessness, which would arrive when he realized that his money was indeed gone.

21. *kneaded it* : pressed it together with his hands.

22. *oven* : a closed chamber near a fire for cooking, baking, or drying.

25-6. *There was . . . truth* : there was no way left by which he could escape even for a moment from the dreadful fact that his money was indeed gone.

28-9. *with the prostration . . . passion* : when the thinking powers are paralysed by an overwhelming emotion.

30. *belief-in-contradictory images* : refusal to accept the evidence of one's senses.

31-2. *because it is . . . fact* : because it can be removed by the evidence of one's senses.

36-7. *to strain . . . bags* : to overtask his brown eyes in looking for the bags.

PAGE 45. 1. *gave . . . scream* : uttered a shrill echoing cry.

1. *had relieved . . . truth* : saved him from that madness in the sudden disaster would otherwise have caused.

4. *tottered* : staggered.

5-6. *instinctively . . . reality* : going by a natural impulse to his accustomed seat, as if to assure himself that he was not dreaming.

✓ 8. *the first shock of certainty was passed* : the first effect of the blow was over.

9. *he entertained eagerly* : he snatched at such a possibility.

11-12. *brought . . . it* : revived his physical powers.

13. *the rain . . . him* : the wind blew the rain upon him.

18. *inroad* : housebreaking.

✓ 19-20. *the same* : in the same state or condition.

22-3. *a cruel . . . reach* : a malignant supernatural being unassailable by man.

25. *vaguer dread* : more mysterious fear.

25-7. *fixed . . . hands* : concentrated his thoughts as far as possible on the idea of a human thief, who could be arrested.

27. *His thoughts . . . at* : he thought of.

29. *a ground of suspicion* : a reason for believing them guilty of the theft.

✓ 30. *poacher* : ~~stealer of game~~ (wild animals protected by law and hunted at certain seasons by sportsmen).

30-1. *disreputable* : of bad character.

39-40. *like a . . . desert* : lonely and desolate.

PAGE 46. 1. *laid hold of* : arrested, caught.

✓ 1-2. *Marner's . . . confused* : Marner had no clear conception of how the law was set in motion to deal with criminals.

6. *under the stimulus* : in the excitement.

10. *to slacken his pace* : to reduce his speed.

11. *turning* : road.

12-13. *a place . . . for* : a place of comfort and ease frequented by.

✓ 14. *superfluous stores of linen* : unnecessarily large supplies of linen—a cloth woven from the fibres of the flax plant.

15. *powers and dignities* : men of influence and high position.

16. *make his loss public* : make the loss of his money known.



17. *latch* : a small piece of wood or iron used to fasten a door.

18. *bright bar* : brightly lit room in which liquors were served.

18-19. *less lofty customers* : more humble frequenters.

20. *parlour* : sitting-room.

21. *more select society* : people of higher rank.

21-3. *in which . . . condescension* : among whom the Squire often had the twofold enjoyment of social intercourse and patronage.

23. *dark* : not lighted because unoccupied.

24. *who ornamented its circle* : who graced its society.

26-7. *high-screened* : high-backed, having high backs to protect those who were seated in them from the too great warmth of the fire.

29. *enlarged . . . betters* : and who would have thus afforded a better opportunity for bullying or condescension to their social superiors.

31. *vary their enjoyment* : change the form of their amusement.

32. *spirits* : distilled alcoholic liquor, e.g. whisky or brandy.

33-4. *in company . . . beer* : among people who demanded beer to drink, among their social inferiors. The authoress here implies that the poorer people in the village drank beer, and the richer whisky as the more expensive beverage.

## CHAPTER VI.

SUMMARY.—When Silas Marner arrived at the door of the Rainbow Inn, it was occupied by some of the poorer villagers, who were sitting drinking and smoking. At first there was silence among them, but after a short time a discussion arose between the butcher (Mr. Lundy) and the farrier (Dowlas), about the identity of a certain red cow lately purchased by the butcher, which cow was stated by the farrier to have been purchased from Mr. Lammeter. Peace was made between the contending parties by Mr. Snell, the landlord. But then the company united in ridiculing Mr. Tookey, the deputy parish-clerk, who had been appointed to assist Mr. Macey, on account of the

latter's old age and increasing infirmities. Peace was again made by the landlord, who invited Mr. Macey to tell his experiences of the Lammeter family. Mr. Macey then related an incident which occurred at the marriage of Mr. Lammeter and Miss Osgood, and then went on to explain that the Lammeters rented the Warrens so cheaply, because the former owner, one Cliff, had left the property to some charitable institution in London. Mr. Macey also said that the apparition of Mr. Cliff might sometimes be seen at the stables of the Warrens. A discussion then ensued as to whether ghosts exist or not, in which Mr. Dowlas, who scoffed at the idea of ghosts, took a prominent part. The landlord once more settled the dispute, saying that both parties were right, since some people could see ghosts and others could not.

✓ In this chapter we have a charming representation of the conversation of English rustics in the early nineteenth century. The humour is genial, and reveals that sympathetic insight which is one of George Eliot's most striking characteristics. Here in the description of the life and manners of a Midland village—and in such a village George Eliot passed her earliest and most impressionable years—we have the authoress at her best. When she enlarged the scope of her work and attempted the political, historical, or more consciously didactic novel, her success was not so great.

35-6. *which . . . animation*: which was noisy and excited.

37. *intermittent*: interrupted by long pauses, irregular.

PAGE 47. 1. *pipes*: tobacco pipes. Hindustani, 'chilam.' *puffed*: smoked.

2. *which . . . severity*: which seemed somewhat austere and reserved.

✓ 4-5. *as if a bet . . . winked*: as if a wager had been made regarding the man who should move an eyelid first.

6. *fustian*: coarse cotton cloth.

*smock frocks*: a coarse linen blouse or over-garment, worn by peasants.

6-7. *kept . . . down*: looked on the ground.

7. *rubbed*: passed the backs of.

8. *funereal*: gloomy.

✓ 10. *a man of a neutral disposition*: he wished to please all parties so that all might frequent the 'Rainbow'.

11. *accustomed . . . differences* : who took no part in human quarrels.

11-12. *as . . . liquor* : because a man needed something to drink whatever his opinions were.

13. *broke silence* : commenced the conversation.  
*doubtful* : dubious.

15. *'ud* : would.

*beast* : cow.

*druv* : drove.

18. *He gave . . . puffs* : he exhaled tobacco smoke several times.

19-20. *And . . . wrong* : and they would be about right.

21-2. *After this . . . before* : after this faint ineffectual effort to commence a conversation, silence again reigned uninterruptedly.

23. *a red Durham* : a red (cow) of the Durham (breed).  
*the farrier* : Hindustani, 'nālbānd,' one who shoes horses.

23-4. *taking . . . discourse* : renewing the conversation.

28. *responsibility* : risk.

29-30. *in his . . . treble* : in his pleasant but hoarse and shrill voice.

31. *who . . . of* : from whom you purchased it.

33. *o' this countryside* : rural district.

34. *she'd* : she (the cow) had.

*a white star on her brow* : a white mark or spot on her forehead.

36-7. *twinkled knowingly* : sparkled cunningly.

40. *I don't say contrary* : I don't deny it.

PAGE 48. 2. *throwing himself backward* : leaning suddenly backward.

*defiantly* : in a tone of challenge or provocation.

5. *bargain or no bargain* : whether you bought her cheap or dear.

5-6. *I've been . . . her* : I have given her purgative medicine.

7-8. *conversational spirit* : powers of argument.

9. *I'm not . . . no man* : I do not wish to contradict any one.

10-11. *Some are . . . myself* : a metaphor from the butcher's trade. I do not always hold the same opinions as other people.

11-12. *but I don't . . . 'em* : but I respect the opinions of others, even when I differ from them.

12. *it's a lovely carkiss* : it's beautiful meat ; *carkiss*, rustic equivalent of *carcass*.

13-14. *anybody . . . look at it* : any reasonable person would weep at the sight of it.

19-20. *with the same . . . before* : in the same gentle hoarse voice as before.

20-1. *not if a man . . . black* : I would not contradict a man even if he were to swear to the truth of a statement, until he became black in the face.

21-2. *he's no meat . . . bargains* : another metaphor from the butcher's trade. I have nothing to do with him, and what he says does not concern me.

23. *I'll stick to* : I'll maintain.

26. *pig-headed* : obstinate.

29. *stick . . . at it* : maintain that, since you profess to adhere to your statements.

30. *let . . . alone* : let us cease this dispute about the cow.

33. *I say . . . that* : I express no opinion on that point.

34. *for the matter . . . that* : as regards that matter.

36. *upo' that head* : about that.

37. *ch* : interrogatory word, meaning here, 'do you not ?'

38. *these parts* : this neighbourhood.

*The Warrens* : the name of Mr. Lammeter's house.

39. *parish-clerk* : a parish is an ecclesiastical district under one pastor, having its own officers and supporting its own poor.

40. *functions* : duties.

PAGE 49. 1. *small-featured* : insignificant-looking.

2. *twirled his thumbs* : moved his thumbs rapidly round one another.

3. *complacency* : self-satisfaction.

*slightly seasoned with* : somewhat mingled with ; with some admixture of.

4. *in answer to . . . appeal* : when thus called upon by the landlord.

7. *I've laid by now* : I have retired ; given up work.

*and gev . . . uns* : resigned in favour of younger men.

8. *them as* : those who ; referring sarcastically to the education of Mr. Tookey, the deputy-clerk.

9. *pernouncing* : how to pronounce their words correctly.  
*that's come up since my day* : I was not taught that when I was at school. That's something new, one of these new-fangled ideas.

10. *pointing at* : referring to.

11. *with an . . . propriety* : with an expression which showed that he was very desirous of behaving with due decorum.

11-12. *I'm nowise . . . place* : I know my place. I am not the man to thrust myself forward.

15-16. *you'd keep . . . you* : you would sing the hymns correctly in the church.

16. *you're for practising* : you wish to practise.

17. *jocose* : humorous, merry.

18. *wheelwright* : maker of wheels.

*week-day capacity* : on other days than Sunday.

19. *leader of the choir* : conductor of the band of singers belonging to the church.

*winked* : Hindustani, 'ānk jhabkāna.'

20. *officially* : in their public capacity.

21. *the bassoon and the key-bugle* : in reference to the instruments which they played.

*bassoon* : a musical wind-instrument of a bass or very low tone.

*key-bugle* : a horn which sounds the *key*, or fundamental note of a piece of music.

*in the confidence* : firmly believing, feeling sure.

22. *the sense* : the opinion.

24. *deputy-clerk* : assistant clerk.

25. *turned very red* : blushed deeply.

27. *as* : ungrammatical; should be 'that'.

28. *there's people . . . standard* : there are some people who consider themselves the best judges of music.

33. *youthful presumption* : the forward conduct of the young Mr. Tookey.

34. *allays* : always.

*'pinions* : opinions.

38. *cracked* : split, having a chink or flaw.

PAGE 50. 1-2. *to partially . . . office* : to help to discharge the duties.

3. *your infirmities* : the weakness of age.

*unfitting* : unfit to discharge the duties of your office.

5. *done the same* : done so.

6. *two folks* : different people.

7. *the old . . . gift* : has a talent for music.

8. *why* : here is equivalent to 'for which reason'.

9. *Rovier* : rustic for 'rover'.

11. *off* : from beginning to end.

*straight* : correctly.

12. *throstle* : thrush, a well-known British song-bird.

12-13. *you'd . . . 'Amens'* : you had better confine yourself to saying 'Amen' at the end of the prayers.

15. *nor* : should be 'than'.

17. *unflinching frankness* : deliberate rudeness.

18. *piquant form of joke* : enjoyable form of wit.

20. *capped* : surpassed.

21. *I see . . . enough* : I understand the meaning of this behaviour very well.

22. *keep cool* : to preserve his equanimity ; to keep his temper.

23. *as* : so that.

24. *Christmas money* : the money distributed among the members of the choir at Christmas-time.

*that's where it is* : that is the reason.

25. *I'll not be put upon by no man* : deprived of my rights, unfairly treated, by any man.

27. *your share* : of the Christmas money.

*to keep out of it* : to remain out of the choir.

28. *there's things . . . varmin* : there are other things that people would pay money to free themselves from beside little noxious animals and insects ; *varmin*, rustic for 'vermin'.

31-2. *dangerous to society* : dangerous because business (for example at the Rainbow) could not be carried on if people were paid to absent themselves.

32. *a joke's a joke* : do not let us take these jests too seriously.

34. *we must . . . take* : we must compromise.

37-8. *to split . . . even* : to settle the dispute by compromising ; mutual forbearance.

PAGE 51. 1. *ear* : taste.

2. *as being . . . profession* : regarding himself as being in some sort a doctor ; medical man.

2-3. *in requisition* : needed.

3-4. *having music in his soul* : having a taste or love for music.

6. *following up* : supporting.

7. *conciliatory view* : friendly or peace-making attitude.  
*old clerk* : Mr. Macey.

8. *and him . . . singer* : considering that he used to be such a good singer.

9. *as is known for* : who is reputed.

*fiddler* : violin player.

10. *it's a pity . . . village* : it is unfortunate that Solomon does not live.

12. *I'd keep . . . would* : I would supply him with the liver and lungs of cattle without making any charge—I would indeed.

14. *in the height of complacency* : with great self-satisfaction.

15. *for musicianers* : as musical.

15-16. *as far . . . tell* : time out of mind.

16-17. *them things . . . out* : a taste for music is not so common nowadays.

24. *I should think I did* : I do indeed.

24-6. *who had . . . narration* : who had now been so much flattered that he was willing to tell his story.

27. *nor* : should be 'than'.

28. *as now is* : who is living now.

*from a bit north'ard* : should be 'from a place a little to the north'.

28-9. *so far . . . out* : so far as I knew; as far as I could tell.

29-30. *But there's . . . those parts* : no one knows very much about that part of the country. (The Indian student should remember that this is the rustic speech of villagers.)

33. *reasonable* : fitting; as it should be.

33-4. *we heard tell as* : we heard it said that.

35. *as had* : should be 'who had'.

37. *along of* : because of; owing to.

38. *there's reasons . . . knows on* : though an event may have causes which nobody suspects.

39. *that's . . . out* : that is about all I have been able to find out.

40-1. *they'll find you . . . off* : they will discover fifty reasons for an event for you at once.

PAGE 52. 1-2. *winking . . . corner* : close to them.

2. *niver* : never.

*Howsomever* : however.

3. *as* : that.

*parish'ner* : inhabitant of the parish.

*know'd* : knew.

4. *the rights and customs o' things* : what was right and proper.

*keep a good house* : entertained a good deal.

5. *looked on* : liked.

6-7. *he'd niver a sister* : he never had a sister.

9. *lass* : girl.

*eh, you can't think* : indeed, you cannot imagine (how handsome).

10. *this young lass* : Nancy Lammeter.

✓ 10-11. *as don't know . . . 'em* : who are ignorant of what things were like before they were born.

12. *as was* : who lived then.

13. *marry 'em* : to perform the marriage ceremony.

15. *in instalments* : a little at a time ; in successive portions.

15-16. *according to precedent* : as usual.

✓ 17. *a partic'lar thing* : a remarkable circumstance.

✓ 19-20. *in a congratulatory tone* : in a tone expressive of sympathetic approval of Mr. Macey's good fortune.

21. *confused in his head* : muddle-headed ; weak in the brain.

25. *a drop of summat warm* : a little stimulant.

26-7. *he'd . . . Janiuary* : he insisted on being married in January.

✓ 29-30. *for it isn't . . . can't help* : Mr. Macey means that one has more freedom of choice in fixing the date of a marriage than of a funeral or baptism.

✓ 32. *by the rule o' contrairy, like* : by the rule of opposites, so to speak.

35-6. *partic'larest* : most remarkable.

37-8. *like as* : just as.

39. *to what went before* : i.e. to the prayer of which 'Amen' is the conclusion.

PAGE 53. 1. *live enough* : sufficiently wide awake.

4. *impotence* : weakness.

5. *all of a tremble* : trembling all over.

✓ 5-6. *as if . . . like* : Mr. Macey, a tailor, takes his metaphors from the tailor's trade. Compare p. 48, ll. 10-11, and ll. 21-2. An educated man would have said, 'I was on the horns of a dilemma'—a state of



affairs in which it is difficult to determine what course to pursue.

6-7. *I couldn't . . . me* : I could not be so presumptuous as.

8-9. *fast* : legally.

9-10. *the words are contrary* : the words used in the service are the opposite of what should have been used.

10. *my head . . . mill* : my brain was working with the energy and rapidity of a machine.

10-12. *I was allays . . . round 'em* : I was always remarkable for looking at a matter on all sides, and for considering it from every point of view.

13. *as makes folks . . . wedlock* : which makes people legally married.

17. *glue* : Hindustani, 'sūrās,' a sticky substance prepared by boiling the hoofs and skins of animals.

19. *It isn't the meanin', it's the glue* : Mr. Macey is trying to say, 'it isn't one's intentions that matter, but one's actions.'

20. *worreted* : disturbed in mind.

*as if I'd . . . at once* : one of Mr. Macey's duties as parish clerk was to ring the church bells for service.

21. *got* : went.

*vestry* : a room in the church building in which the vestments are kept, and parochial meetings held.

21-2. *to sign their names* : bride and bridegroom in England have to sign their names in the marriage register.

22-3. *you can't . . . inside* : you can have no idea of the thoughts which revolve in the brain of a clever man like me.

24. *you held in* : kept quiet ; restrained your desire to speak.

26. *tight* : firmly.

27. *I out wi' everything* : I told him all the facts of the case.

*respectful* : respectfully.

28. *allays* : always.

*he made light on it* : he made little of it ; represented it as of no importance.

29. *Pooh, pooh* : nonsense.

*make yourself easy* : do not disturb yourself.

31. *does it* : makes the marriage legal.

34. *what's the rights and wrongs o' things* : what is the

correct solution of a difficulty; what is the right course of action to pursue.

36. *turned out all right*: proved to be very happy.

37-8. *afore the lasses were growed up*: before the daughters grew up to be women.

39. *more looked on*: with a better name; with a higher reputation.

PAGE 54. 3. *was . . . suspended*: stopped for a moment.

5. *there was more to come*: the story was not finished yet.

6. *duly put the leading question*: according to custom asked the question that was necessary to elicit the remainder of the story.

7. *a pretty fortin*: a large amount of money.

9. *I daresay . . . keep it whole*: I believe it has taken Mr. Lammeter all his time (i.e. it is as much as he has been able to do) to preserve it intact.

11. *a talk*: a saying.

18. *groom*: Hindustani, 'sais.' A groom is one who has charge of horses.

19. *livery*: uniform worn by servants.

21-2. *for . . . didn't*: i.e. Cliff thought of nothing (did not think of anything) but horses and hunting.

22. *Lunnon*: London.

24. *grip*: power of gripping or holding on to a horse with one's knees.

27. *old Harry*: the devil.

32. *ride the tailor out o' the lad*: make the boy rise superior to his humble origin by riding, so as to gain courage and self-confidence.

33. *not but what*: I do not deny that.

33-4. *in respect as*: inasmuch as, seeing that.

35-6. *since afore . . . shillings*: since the time when coins bearing the image of Queen Anne were still in circulation.

37-8. *sore vexed*: much troubled.

38-9. *nobody . . . him*: none of the gentry in this neighbourhood could endure him.

PAGE 55. 1. *queerer nor ever*: more eccentric than ever.

2. *dead*: middle.

4. *he got . . . sleep*: his health failed so that he couldn't sleep.

6. *a mercy*: providential.

8. *raving*: in raging madness.

9. *Lunnon Charity*: a charitable institution, perhaps a hospital, in London.

12. *out of all charicter*: quite out of harmony with (much too big for) the rest of the buildings.

13. *to set . . . banging*: to close the doors with force so as to make a great noise.

19. *winking mysteriously*: blinking his eyelid in a knowing manner.

22. *tow'rt daybreak*: toward sunrise.

23. *Cliff's holiday*: the name given to the mysterious sights and sounds which were said to occur sometimes in the stables.

25. *the holiday . . . like*: the relief, or holiday; the devil sometimes allowed Mr. Cliff from burning in hell.

28. *nor*: than.

31. *farrier*: one who shoes horses.

31-2. *who was . . . cue*: who was eagerly waiting for this signal to take his part in the conversation.

32. *a nut . . . crack*: a difficulty for you to solve.

33. *the negative spirit*: the hostile critic; the one who threw doubt upon the statements and beliefs of the others.

35-6. *as doesn't . . . finger-post*: who does not disregard patent facts.

37. *wager*: bet.

38. *dry night*: fine night; a night when it is not raining.

*pasture*: meadow, grazing ground.

40. *the blowing of our own noses*: Hindustani, 'nāk sāf kārna.'

PAGE 56. 1-3. *'ull ventur . . . sure of*: who will risk a ten-pound note by betting on the presence of the ghosts, whose existence they pretend to be so certain of.

6. *rheumatise*: rheumatism, a painful disease of the muscles and joints.

12. *tapping*: striking.

13. *he's no call . . . bet*: there is no need for him to make any bet.

18. *a snort*: a sniff of contempt.

19. *to make out*: to find out.

20. *'ghos'es* : ghosts.

*a'ready* : already.

*against* : opposed to.

23. *I'd as lief do it* : I would as willingly do it.

32-3. *You're none . . . price* : another metaphor from the butchers' trade. It is no concern of mine, and I do not intend to dispute with you about it.

33-4. *If anybody . . . let him* : literally, 'if any man will take you at your own valuation' ; but here it means, 'If any one wishes to take up your challenge, let him do so.'

36. *yapping cur* : worthless barking dog.

39. *turn-tail* : cowardly, runaway.

PAGE 57. 1. *candour* : frankness.

3. *pike-staff* : a staff with a pointed iron head, at one time used by travellers, hence the phrase 'As plain as a pike-staff' means 'Quite plain to sight or understanding'.

5. *the strongest of cheese* : cheese with the most powerful smell.

6. *see'd* : ungrammatical for 'saw'.

7. *the smell for them* : the power of perceiving them.

8. Here the worthy innkeeper is a little confused. What he means to say is 'using the word *smell* as a metaphor to mean the power of perceiving ghosts'.

9. *I'm for holding with both sides* : I am in favour of agreeing with both parties in the dispute.

11. *a wink* : a glimpse.

12. *back* : support.

14. *For the smell . . . by* : for in this matter it is necessary to take into consideration whether a person has the power to perceive ghosts or not.

15. *analogical argument* : argument by analogy, or by using the simile of the smell from cheese, and saying that just as his wife could not smell cheese, so some people had not the power of perceiving ghosts.

18-19. *refreshed irritation* : renewed anger—as if the same drink of beer which refreshed his body had renewed his annoyance—and capacity for expressing it.

19. *what's . . . it* : the smelling of cheese has nothing to do with the seeing of ghosts.

20. *Did ever . . . black eye* : Mr. Dowlas argues that if a ghost can be seen by the bodily eye, it should be capable of inflicting a bodily injury.

22. *skulking* hiding, lurking.

27. *crass incompetence* : obvious inability.

27-8. *to apprehend . . . phenomena* : to understand the causes and occasions of the appearance of ghosts.

## CHAPTER VII.

SUMMARY.—In the midst of the dispute about the existence or otherwise of ghosts, the pale figure of Silas Marner was suddenly seen standing among the company. For a few moments Silas was too breathless and the company too terrified to speak. Then the landlord recovered himself sufficiently to ask Silas his business. Silas exclaimed that he had been robbed. He was then made to take off his coat, which was wet with rain, and sit by the fire, and as he did so, and proceeded to unfold his story, he experienced, though unknown to himself, the subtle influence of human sympathy, from which he had for so long been debarred. As they listened to Silas the company no longer believed that he was influenced by the devil, and began to think he must be telling the truth, not because they realized that he had no motive to invent the story of the robbery, but because they thought that if he had been supported by the devil, he would not have looked so helpless and miserable, and that therefore, if the devil ever had been his friend, he must have quarrelled with him, and taken his revenge by robbing him. With these thoughts in his mind, the landlord rebuked Silas for suspecting Jem Rodney of the theft, since at the time when the robbery took place, Jem must have been drinking his beer with the others in the inn.

Silas, remembering that he himself had once been unjustly accused of theft, apologized to Jem, and lamented his inability to guess where the money could be. The farrier, Mr. Dowlas, now expressed his opinion that the robbery had been committed, not by the devil, or any evil spirit, but by some vagrant, and he suggested that two of the most intelligent members of the company should go with Silas to the house of Kench, the policeman, who was ill, and persuade him to appoint a deputy, who would go back with Silas and search his house. The landlord and the farrier took it for granted that they, as the most 'sensible' persons present, should go to Kench's. But

Mr. Macey objected that in no case could the farrier act as a policeman, because the law said that no doctor could be a policeman, and the farrier was a doctor, though only a cow doctor. This led to a fresh dispute, which was again settled by the intervention of the landlord, and finally Silas, accompanied by the landlord and the farrier, 'in an unofficial capacity,' went out into the darkness.

29. *Yet the next moment . . . them*: Mr. Macey had asserted that ghosts would not wish to be believed in by people so ignorant as the farrier, but the next moment it appeared that ghosts were more willing to prove the fact of their existence to ignorant people than Mr. Macey had supposed.

32-3. *warm light*: genial glow.

34. *with his . . . eyes*: with a weird ghostly expression.

34-5. *the long pipes . . . movement*: all the company took their long pipes from their mouths at the same moment.

35-58. 1. *like the antennæ . . . insects*: just as insects move their long feelers when alarmed.

PAGE 58. 2. *sceptical*: unbelieving.

3. *an apparition*: a ghost.

7. *an argumentative triumph*: a feeling of elation at this proof of the correctness of his argument.

8. *neutralize*: to cancel, to remove.

10. *trance*: a state in which the soul appears to be absent from the body, or to be rapt in visions.

11. *demonstration*: proof.

12. *contented*: satisfied.

15-16. *habitual sense*: influence of the accustomed feeling.

17-18. *confident . . . neutrality*: feeling sure that, since he had always been neutral in all disputes, the ghost would do him no harm.

19. *adjuring*: addressing.

21. *what's . . . to you?* what is the matter with you?

22. *gaspingly*: in a breathless tone.

26. *the idea . . . subsiding*: realizing that here was no ghost.

*off his head*: out of his wits; mad.

*I doubt*: I suspect.

27. *He's wet through*: his garments are saturated with rain.

28. *the outermost man*: occupied the position the most remote from the fire.

PAGE 59. 5-6. *I'll pitch . . . eye*: I'll throw this tin mug in your face.

10. *if you've got any information to lay*: if you wish to bring any charge.

13-14. *speak straight forward*: tell a plain story.

15-17. *who began . . . occasion*: who began to suspect that he had not quite done himself justice, and that he had not risen to the height of the opportunity.

18. *shapped*: fastened with leather straps or thongs.  
*for*: as.

20. *run*: become.

22-3. *remained . . . question*: had not yet been proved.

25. *aloof*: apart.

29. *transient*: short lived.

37-8. *I could . . . wear it*: it would be as easy for me to steal the clergyman's gown and wear it, as steal Marner's money.

*surplice*: a white outer garment worn by clergymen.

PAGE 60. 1. *under frequent questionings*: amidst many interruptions caused by questions.

3. *strangely novel situation*: quite new experience.

*opening his trouble*: relating his misfortune.

6. *nearest promise*: best hope.

7-8. *his passionate . . . loss*: his intense anxiety about the disappearance of his money.

8-10. *Our consciousness . . . without us*: just as we do not see the beginning of any organic change in the world of nature around us, so we seldom are aware of the beginning of a change in our habitual thoughts and feelings.

10-11. *there have been . . . bud*: for example, the life-fluid (sap) of a plant or tree passes through it many times before we see the outward sign of a changed inward condition, namely the bud.

13. *melted away*: disappeared.

13-14. *before . . . distress*: as the obvious fact of his misery was made clear to them.

16-18. *they were capable . . . falsely*: not because they were immediately able to realize that Silas Marner could have no object in stating falsely that he had been robbed.

19. *Folks as had . . . back 'em*: people who were in league with (supported by) the devil.

20. *mushed* : distressed.

21-9. *Rather . . . after* : they did not believe that Silas Marner was in league with the devil. On the contrary, it seemed to them more likely that his disgraceful compact with the evil one, if it ever had existed, was now at an end, and that this unkind treatment had been meted out to Silas Marner by the devil himself; and this, they thought, was evident from the remarkable fact that no footprints of the thief were visible, and because he had chanced to hit upon the very time, which no human being could have guessed, when Silas left the house with the door unlocked.

28-9. *somebody . . . after* : some one whom it was useless to send the policeman to arrest, i.e. the devil.

33-4. *You musn't be . . . Jem* : you must not look with suspicion upon poor Jem.

34-7. *There may be . . . wink* : it is possible that Jem deserves punishment for having stolen a hare or two, if we must examine all his faults very carefully, and not allow any of them to escape us.

38. *decentest* : most respectable.

39-40. *by your own account* : according to what you yourself say.

PAGE 61. 3. *ta'en up* : arrested.

5. *torpid* : dull and feeble.

7. *compunction* : contrition, repentance.

✓ 10. *to assure . . . face* : to make certain from his look that he was innocent.

11-12. *I ought to have thought* : I should have reflected before accusing you.

12. *nothing to witness* : no evidence.

14. *you came . . . head* : I thought of you.

19. *they're gone* : the coins have gone.

19-20. Mr. Macey concludes that the devil had taken the coins to hell with him.

21. *Tchuh* : an expression of impatience or contempt, 'nonsense.'

22. *with a cross-examining air* : in the manner of a barrister questioning a witness.

27. *they'd be . . . to carry* : they would not be too heavy to carry.

28. *tramp* : vagrant, vagabond.

28-9. *and as for . . . all right* : and with regard to what



you say about there being no footmarks on the floor, and about the bricks being in their right place, and the sand undisturbed.

35. *what I vote is* : my proposal is.

*sensiblist* : most intelligent and trustworthy.

38. *deppity* : deputy.

39. *'ull take upon him to* : will be so presumptuous as to.

40. *It isn't . . . walk to* : it is not a long way to.

PAGE 62. 1. *if it's me as is deppity* : 'If I am appointed deputy.' Notice Mr. Dowlas's naïve assumption that he is one of the 'sensiblist' of the company.

2. *examine your premises* : look over your house.

3. *and if . . . that* : and if any one has any objection to make to my proposal.

4. *say it out* : speak out boldly.

5. *pregnant* : weighty.

5-6. *re-established his self-complacency* : recovered his good opinion of himself.

7. *superlatively* : most.

9-10. *personally concerned in the proposition* : referred to in the proposal, that the two most sensible members of the company should be selected.

14. *a information* : a statement regarding a crime.

17. *the sense* : the opinion.

17-19. *duly rehearsing . . . 'nolo episcopari'* : after going through the modest formality of declaring himself unfit, and therefore unwilling to accept the office.

*'Nolo episcopari'* : 'I am unwilling to accept the office of bishop.' It was believed, though without foundation, that in former times a person about to be elected bishop modestly refused the office twice, and if he did so a third time his refusal was accepted.

19-20. *the chill . . . Kench's* : the cold task of going to the house of the policeman.

23. *oracular* : dogmatic.

27. *a hoss-fly* : a horse-fly, a large fly that stings horses.

29. *cuteness* : acuteness, intelligence.

30. *hot debate* : fierce argument.

31. *indisposed . . . quality* : unwilling to forgo the title.

35. *fonder of* : more favourable to.

39. *to act* : to play the part of.

40. *driven into a corner by* : unable to escape from.

PAGE 63. 5-6. *the dispute was accommodated*: a compromise was arranged.

7. *a second person*: i. e. in the company of Mr. Snell, the landlord.

8-9. *turned out*: went out.

11. *to watch for the morning*: to keep awake till the morning.

## CHAPTER VIII.

SUMMARY.—On the night of the robbery Godfrey returned from Mrs. Osgood's party to find that his brother Dunstan had not returned. This did not at first disturb him much, absorbed as he was with thoughts about Nancy, and accustomed to Dunstan's vagaries.

Much excitement was caused in the village next morning by the news of the robbery. Some of the villagers were of opinion that a tinder-box found in a ditch near the stone pits might afford a clue to the discovery of the theft. Others thought that Silas had invented the whole story. Others again were disposed to attribute the disappearance of the money to supernatural agency.

Among the more influential residents of the village Mr. Snell connected the discovery of the tinder-box with the visit a month before of a pedlar to the village—a pedlar whom popular report soon credited with ear-rings and a dark 'foreign' look. But Silas Marner could give no evidence incriminating the pedlar, or even justifying any suspicion against him, although the villagers were anxious that a warrant should be issued for his arrest.

Godfrey's interest in the matter faded as he became more anxious about the non-appearance of Dunstan and Wildfire, and he had just set out riding to Batherley to make inquiries about them, when he met Mr. Bryce, who acquainted him with the sad fate of Wildfire, and the disappearance of Dunstan.

Godfrey was much disturbed at the news, and at first resolved that he would confess the whole truth about his giving Fowler's rent-money to Dunstan, as well as the fact of his unfortunate marriage. But in the morning the strength of his resolution faded, as he thought of the anger of his father, and the impossibility of his ever being on terms of friendship with Nancy again, when once his marriage became known.

17-18. *housing himself*: lodging, putting up.

19. *the run had kept him*: the hunt had caused him to remain.

20-21. *was not likely . . . suspense*: for he was not the man to trouble himself about leaving Godfrey in doubt as to whether Wildfire was sold or not.

22. *too full of*: too much occupied with.

23. *exasperation*: bitter anger.

*lot*: fate.

33-4. *a tinder-box with a flint and steel*: the predecessor of the modern match-box. Sparks were struck from the steel by the flint and used to ignite little pieces of wood or paper.

PAGE 64. 1. *inference*: explanation of its presence.

3-4. *A small . . . heads*: a few of the villagers dissented from this opinion.

4. *intimated their opinion*: hinted.

5-6. *it was not a robbery . . . tinder-boxes*: that in investigating a robbery of this kind the tinder-box could be of very little use.

6-7. *had a queer look with it*: seemed rather strange, would not bear investigation.

7-9. *that such things . . . doer*: that it was quite possible that he had robbed himself and then set the police to look for the thief.

10. *grounds*: reasons.

13. *There was no knowing . . . gain*: that it was impossible to say what some people considered to be to their advantage.

15. *grounds or no grounds*: whether they could give reasons for them or not.

16. *partly crazy*: half mad.

18. *suspicious of deceit*: charges of falsehood.

*pook-pooked the tinder-box*: ridiculed the idea that the tinder-box had anything to do with the robbery.

19. *repudiated it . . . suggestion*: rejected it as a somewhat blasphemous idea.

20. *tending to imply*: seeming to indicate.

21-2. *no power . . . bricks*: i.e. no supernatural power.

23-4. *he turned . . . Tookey*: he rebuked Mr. Tookey somewhat severely.

24-5. *that this was a view . . . parish clerk*: thinking that it was very right and proper that a parish clerk like himself, who had duties connected with the church and

religion to perform, should attribute the robbery to supernatural means.

26. *carried it still farther* : went even beyond Mr. Macey in the expression of his views.

30. *made out* : discovered.

32. *Now don't you be for overshooting the mark* : do not go too far.

34. *admonishingly* : in a warning manner.

*you're allays at* : you are always doing.

34-6. *if I throw a stone . . . beyond* : if I make a remark which is quite suitable and appropriate, you think you can do better than that, and you exaggerate.

37. *against the tinder-box* : against the idea that the tinder-box had some connexion with the robbery.

38. *o' King George's making* : appointed by the king.

39-40. *it 'ud be ill-becoming . . . King George* : it would not be fitting for a parish official to find fault with the king. George III established in each district a commission of the peace.

PAGE 65. 2. *a higher consultation* : a discussion among people of a higher social rank.

5. *substantial* : wealthy.

*It had just occurred to Mr. Snell* : the thought had just struck Mr. Snell.

7. *to put two and two together* : to draw conclusions from the facts he observed.

10. *a pedlar* : an itinerant vendor; one who goes about the country selling small wares.

13-14. *a clue to be followed out* : a possible solution of the mystery to be investigated.

14. *memory . . . fertile* : when certain admitted facts seem to support a given theory it is remarkable how many other corroborative facts people think they remember, tending to confirm their belief in that theory.

16. *recovered . . . of* : remembered clearly.

18. *a look with his eye* : a peculiar look.

18-19. *which fell . . . organism* : which disagreeably affected Mr. Snell's delicate nerves.

23-4. *a swarthy . . . honesty* : a dark foreign complexion which suggested dishonesty. A 'foreigner' in Mr. Snell's opinion would naturally be dishonest.

27-8. *a docile clairvoyante* : a clairvoyante who is anxious to see what she is wished to see.

28. *clairvoyante* : a woman who is said to possess the power of seeing absent persons, things, or events.

30. *contracting* : narrowing.

35. *mayhap* : perhaps.

35-6. *I can't . . . to say* : I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of stating positively that the pedlar did wear ear-rings.

37. *surmise* : guess.

40. *gathering emphasis* : increasing vehemence.

PAGE 66. 2. *an impression was created* : the belief was established.

3. *the eliciting of* : ascertaining.

5. *image* : memory, mental picture.

7-8. *taken . . . recollection* : mistaken for a distinct memory.

8. *glazier* : one who puts glass in windows.

11. *the sacrament* : the bread and wine of holy communion (vide St. Luke xxii. 19-20 ; St. Matt. xxvi. 26-8).

13. *in the shape . . . moon* : of a crescent shape.

16-17. *they had . . . creep* : they (the ear-rings) had terrified her.

19. *by way . . . clue* : in order to make clearer the solution of the mystery promised by the discovery of the tinder-box.

24. *the clearing-up of this robbery* : the discovery of the perpetrator of this theft.

26-7. *while . . . duties* : while such arduous public duties were being discharged there.

34. *ajar* : open.

35. *clutched strongly at* : eagerly embraced.

37. *a definite image of a whereabouts* : a clear idea of a place.

39. *see it* : imagine it, see it with his mind's eye.

PAGE 67. 2. *prowling about* : wandering about in search of plunder.

6. *and only look* : merely through looking.

9. *for* : as, to be.

10. *'sizes* : assizes, courts of justice.

10-11. *not so long . . . it* : within the memory of persons still living.

14. *had treated it lightly* : had made little of it ; had regarded it with some contempt.

18. *random* : careless, irresponsible.

19. *as if . . . Mr. Snell who, &c.* : paraphrase—'since many besides Mr. Snell had noticed something peculiar about the pedlar'.

24-5. *and throw cold water on* : and discredit.

26. *drawing up a warrant* : a writ for the arrest of the pedlar.

28. *setting off* : starting.

30. *faded* : diminished.

32. *rest in uncertainty* : remain uncertain.

34. *ugly* : mean, contemptible.

36. *squandered* : wasted, dissipated.

39. *was irritated with himself* : blamed himself, was angry with himself.

PAGE 68. 1. *to still* : to calm.

✓ 1-2. *that superstitious . . . us all* : owing to that irrational belief that we all retain.

5-6. *a hat . . . lane* : the hat of a rider appearing over a hedge the other side of a corner of the road.

✓ 6. *as if . . . succeeded* : as if he had by this means removed the evil which he dreaded.

8-8. *But no sooner . . . sank again* : but as soon as the horse came into view, his hopes fell again.

11. *that . . . disagreeable* : that he was the bearer of bad news.

19. *parted with it* : given it.

21. *flushed with exasperation* : red with anger.

24. *swinging* : very high.

25. *and what . . . stake him* : and he went straightway and impaled the animal on a fence.

*fly at* : he tried to jump.

26. *atop* : on the top.

27. *a pretty good while* : a considerable time.

32. *the end* : the result.

37. *was . . . sometimes* : was in the habit of playing tricks sometimes.

PAGE 69. 3. *give him leave* : allow.

6. *hard in the mouth* : Hindustani, 'munhzor,' difficult to curb.

7. *making him . . . idea* : making the thought painful to him.

8. *guessed* : supposed.

11. *get rid of* : free himself from.

12. *the long-dreaded crisis*: the decisive moment when he would have to confess everything to his father.

17. *take you*: visit you.

20. *had blown over a little*: till the excitement caused by the bad news had calmed down a little.

21. *the Three Crowns*: an inn.

25. *I'll be bound*: I am sure.

26. *my turning*: the road along which I must go.

27. *'down'*: depressed.

34. *the rest*: i.e. the story of his unfortunate marriage.

36. *the brunt*: the full force, the burden.

39. *put off*: postpone.

PAGE 70. 2-3. *the affair . . . storming*: the matter would be forgotten after a little display of anger on the part of his father.

3-4. *bind . . . this*: bring himself to make such a statement.

5-7. *he had already . . . behoof*: been guilty of an action / almost as dishonest as that of spending the money for his own advantage.

8. *the two acts*: giving the money to Dunstan, and stealing it himself.

9. *blackening*: degrading.

12. *scoundrel*: a rascal, a man altogether without principle.

12-13. *I'll stop short somewhere*: I will fix some limit / to the measure of my wrongdoing, I will draw the line somewhere.

14. *make believe*: pretend.

16. *tortur'd into it*: compelled to give the money owing to the painful threats of my brother.

18. *occasional fluctuations*: a few intervals of wavering.

18-19. *kept his will . . . father*: maintained his resolution to confess everything to his father.

20. *withheld*: kept back.

21-2. *that it might . . . matter*: so that he might use it to commence a conversation which would lead up to the confession of his having given the money paid by Fowler to Dunstan, and of his marriage with Molly Farren.

24-5. *calling for remark*: worthy of notice.

29. *she*: i.e. Molly Farren.

31. *by rehearsal*: by imagining it to himself beforehand.

33-4. *Dunstan . . . off* : Dunstan had him in his power in such a way that he was unable to escape.

35. *work up* : excite.

37. *implacable* : relentless.

39. *volcanic matter* : lava that issues in a melted form from a burning mountain and flows down its sides.

PAGE 71. 1. *under favour of his own heedlessness* : owing to his own carelessness.

/ 2. *till . . . force* : till he found their effect unbearable.

4. *unrelentingly hard* : pitilessly severe.

5. *to get into arrears* : to neglect to pay their rent.

6. *their stock* : the number of their cattle.

12. *unrelentingness* : implacable anger.

13. *habitual irresolution* : constant weakness of will, infirmity of purpose.

; 14-15. *He was not . . . fits* : he found no fault with the careless laxity which went before those outbursts of anger. {

17. *just the chance* : a bare possibility.

18. *see this marriage in a light* : so regard this marriage.

18-19. *that would . . . hush it up* : as to be anxious to keep it quiet.

20. *make . . . country* : cause his family to be talked about by the neighbours.

/ 23. *to keep . . . closely* : to preserve fairly well.

/ 24-5. *he had done . . . debating* : he had settled the matter in his own mind.

25-6. *the . . . darkness* : the darkness that preceded the dawn.

26-7. *to reawaken . . . thoughts* : to revive his thoughts of the previous evening.

27. *tired out* : exhausted.

/ 28. *not to be . . . work* : incapable of resuscitation.

31-2. *the old shrinking . . . Nancy* : the former fear of doing anything which would effectually prevent any possibility of him and Nancy coming together in the future.

34. *betrayal* : being found out.

35. *them* : i.e. such chances.

36. *He had . . . light* : he had taken a wrong view of the case.

/ 38-9. *a thorough . . . understanding* : a complete rupture of relations between them.

39. *what* : relative pronoun—that which.



PAGE 72. 1-2. *keep things . . . condition* : leave things as far as possible as they were.

3. *Godfrey . . . that* : for anything Godfrey knew.

5. *everything might blow over* : the excitement caused by his partial confession might die down without any further evil results to himself.

## CHAPTER IX.

SUMMARY.—After his breakfast next morning Godfrey waited to speak to his father. He began by telling the Squire of the death of Wildfire, and surprised him by saying that but for this unfortunate event he would have paid a hundred pounds that morning. But the Squire's surprise was turned to fierce anger when Godfrey went on to explain that Fowler had paid him a hundred pounds as rent, and that he had given it to Dunstan, expecting to be able to repay the amount soon to his father. He could not at the moment invent any plausible excuse for having given the money to Dunstan, and the Squire came very near the truth when he said that Godfrey must have been up to some trick and have been bribing Dunstan not to tell. Godfrey managed, however, to evade his father's inquiries, and after the first explosion of anger the talk turned to the question of Godfrey's marriage, his father rebuking him for not urging his suit with Miss Nancy Lammeter. This placed Godfrey in a fresh difficulty, for he dared not confess to his father that he was already married. However, the danger was over for the moment, and with regard to the future Godfrey trusted to some favourable turn of Fortune—'the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in'.

10. *managing-man* : agent.

12-13. *giving . . . tried it* : stimulating his desire for food, which was not strong in the mornings, by delay ; giving every opportunity to his appetite to assert itself before he indulged it.

14. *substantial catables* : solid food.

15. *he presented himself* : he appeared.

16. *knit brow* : frowning forehead.

17. *hard glance* : severe expression.

17-18. *seemed contradicted . . . feeble mouth* : were apparently at variance with a loose and weak mouth.

19. *slovenly* : untidy.

22. *every whit* : quite.

*refined* : cultured, educated.

23. *slouched their way through life* : passed their lives in a clownish fashion.

24. *in the vicinity . . . 'betters'* : in the neighbourhood of their social superiors.

25-9. *wanted . . . stars* : lacked in their speech and bearing that calmness and sense of power which characterized a man like the Squire, who, having no one of superior rank to himself in the neighbourhood, looked upon social superiors as distant beings, with whom he had hardly anything to do.

29-30. *parish homage* : signs of respect from the inhabitants of the district.

30. *presupposition* : assumption.

34. *not disturbed by comparison* : not upset by having anything or anybody to compare himself and his belongings with.

PAGE 73. 3. *the sweet flower of courtesy is not a growth of* : good manners do not flourish in.

7-8. *indifferently* : carelessly.

8-9. *in a ponderous coughing fashion* : with a heavy affected cough.

13-14. *There's no . . . yourselves* : there's no need for any one to bestir themselves about it but yourselves.

15-19. *but it was a fiction . . . by sarcasm* : but he and his coevals in Raveloe maintained the assumption that only young people were foolish, and that satire was the only means with which wise old people could console themselves in the endurance of their folly.

29. *I might ha' whistled for another* : I should have asked for another in vain.

30. *to unstring* : to loosen his purse-strings, to open his purse.

31-2. *they must turn over a new leaf* : they must change their conduct.

32-3. *what with mortgages . . . pauper* : owing to foreclosures and non-payment of rents I am as much in need of money as a beggar by the roadside.

35. *peace* : with France.

35-6. *the country . . . on* : the country would be ruined, or would have no means of maintenance.

37. *not if . . . up* : even if I sold the property of the tenants to pay the rent with.

38. *I won't put up with him* : I won't endure his conduct.

PAGE 74. 1. *a hundred* : i.e. a hundred pounds.

2. *outlying* : situated at a distance.

6-7. *to make it . . . again* : to seize the opportunity of speaking again.

7. *ward off* : evade.

10. *arrear* : unpaid rents.

11-12. *to produce . . . disclosure* : to put him in the worst frame of mind to receive the confession which Godfrey was about to make.

23. *fool's leap* : foolish jump.

*did for* : killed.

29-31. *so strange . . . pounds* : such a remarkable reversal of the ordinary relations between father and son as that his son should suggest paying him a hundred pounds.

34. *when I was over there* : when I was at his place.

35. *bothered me* : worried me.

PAGE 75. 1. *thick* : friendly.

*collogue* : the Squire means 'conspire'.

2. *embezzle* : to fraudulently appropriate.

*turning out a scamp* : becoming a scoundrel.

3. *I won't have it* : I will not endure it.

3-4. *I'll turn . . . together* : I will expel all of you from the house.

5-6. *my property . . . on it* : I am not compelled by law to leave my property to the eldest son.

9. *lie at the bottom of it* : falsehood connected with it.

21. *brave me* : defy me.

25. *fulfil his threat* : carry out his intention of expelling him.

34. *feeble evasion* : a poor attempt to ward off the question.

35-7. *no sort . . . falsehoods* : every kind of deception must be supported sooner or later by spoken falsehoods.

37-8. *he was quite . . . motives* : he had no motive ready to assign as the reason for his giving the money to Dunstan.

40. *You've been . . . trick* : you've been getting into some mischief.

PAGE 76. 1. *a sudden acuteness* : an unexpected intelligence.

2. *startled* : surprised.

3. *nearness* : accuracy.

4. *to take the next step* : i. e. to tell a lie.

4-5. *a very slight impulse . . . road* : 'facilis descensus Avernii.' When once we have entered upon a wrong course of action, it is only too easy to go on with it.

6. *trying . . . ease* : assuming an indifferent air.

7. *a little affair* : a small matter.

7-8. *it's no . . . anybody else* : it does not concern any one else.

8-9. *It's hardly . . . fooleries* : it is better not to inquire into the follies of young men.

9-10. *it wouldn't . . . you* : you would have lost nothing.

15. *Your goings-on* : your behaviour.

17-18. *kept a good house too* : entertained himself and his friends well, in addition to keeping many horses.

18. *worse* : less prosperous.

*by what I can make out* : so far as I can tell.

19. *so might I* : I could do the same.

*good-for-nothing* : worthless.

20. *to hang on me like horse-leeches* : to waste my property just as leeches suck the blood of a horse.

*horse-leech* : Hindustani, 'jonkhen,' a species of blood-sucking worm, which attaches itself to horses when wading in the water.

21. *that's what it is* : that's the reason of it.

21-2. *I shall pull up* : I shall cease to be so indulgent in the future.

23-8. *He was not . . . better will* : he was not capable of showing deep insight in his estimate of other people's actions, but he had never mistaken his father's weakness for benevolence, and had experienced a dimly felt desire for some outside control which would have kept his infirmity of purpose under restraint and confirmed his better intentions.

31. *It'll be all the worse for you* : such conduct will only injure your own prospects.

31-2. *you'd need . . . together* : for your own sake you should try to assist me in maintaining the family prosperity.

34. *you've taken it ill* : you have always taken offence.

38-9. *whose memory . . . detail* : who refused to allow a general impression, which he wished to retain, to be interfered with by bringing to memory any events which might contradict it.

40. *one while* : at one time.

- PAGE 77. 1. *I didn't offer* : I didn't attempt.  
 2. *I'd as lieve* : I would as soon.  
 3. *if I'd said you nay* : if I had opposed you.  
 4. *you'd ha' kept on with it* : you would have persevered with your suit.  
 5. *a shilly-shally fellow* : an irresolute creature, a man with no mind of his own.  
 7. *call* : need.  
 8. *a proper . . . husband* : a suitable husband.  
 11. *The lass . . . you* : the girl has not actually declined your offer of marriage.  
 16. *Do you stick to it* : are you still of the same mind ?  
 21. *the pluck* : the courage.  
 22. *loath* : unwilling.  
 25. *could ha' stood in your way* : could have been your rival.  
 26. *I'd rather let it be* : I would prefer to do nothing in the matter.  
 33. *how I can think of it* : how I can consider the question of marriage.  
 34. *to settle me* : to place me as a tenant.

- PAGE 78. 6. *to drop into* : to take possession of.  
 9. *look out . . . sold* : take care to have that horse of Dunstan's sold.  
 11. *sneaking* : here 'hiding'.  
 13. *ostler* : one who looks after horses at an inn.  
 14. *hang on* : be dependent upon.  
 21. *sense* : feeling.  
 22. *without . . . position* : leaving him as he was before, i.e. without resulting in his being expelled from his father's house.  
 23-4. *uneasy . . . deceit* : uncomfortable at having involved himself more deeply in evasion and deception.  
 24. *passed* : happened.  
 25. *proposing to Nancy* : asking the hand of Nancy in marriage.  
*had raised a new alarm* : had roused new fears.  
 26. *after-dinner words* : words uttered in the excitement of wine after dinner.  
 27-8. *thrown . . . embarrassment* : placed in the uncomfortable position.  
 28. *absolutely decline her* : actually refuse to marry her. Why would he have to do this ?

30. *some . . . fortune*: some unexpected chance.

33-4. *perhaps even . . . prudence*: perhaps prove his dishonesty to be expedient since it had saved him from the consequence of his own misdeeds.

34. *trusting . . . dice*: depending on some favourable chance.

35. *old-fashioned*: out of date.

36-8. *Favourable Chance . . . believe in*: I suppose all those who are led by their inclinations instead of by their duties worship Chance, as the only means of enabling them to escape from the results of their own foolish actions.

38. *polished*: cultured, refined.

38-9. *get into . . . avow*: involve himself in difficulties which he is ashamed to confess.

40. *issues*: chances.

PAGE 79. 1. *the calculable results . . . position*: the probable consequences of those difficulties.

2. *live outside his income*: spend more than he earns.  
*shirk*: evade.

4. *simpleton*: foolish person.

5. *cajoled . . . interest*: persuaded to use his influence.

6. *state of mind*: (benevolent) disposition.

7-8. *the responsibilities of his office*: the duties of his position.

8-9. *anchor . . . chance*: support himself with the hopes.

9. *the thing left undone*: the duty he has neglected.

9-10. *may turn out . . . importance*: may prove to be less important than was supposed.

10-11. *Let him . . . confidence*: if he reveal his friend's secret.

12. *cunning complexity*: subtle working of varied forces.

14. *a decent craft*: a respectable handicraft.

14-15. *that he may . . . him*: in order to raise his social position by following a profession for which he has no natural talent or inclination.

17-20. *The evil principle . . . kind*: every religion seeks to follow certain good and to avoid certain evil principles. Those who worship Chance pray that it may save them from the application of the principle that as we sow so we must reap.

## CHAPTER X.

SUMMARY.—Inquiries were set on foot to discover the mysterious pedlar, who was believed to have some connexion with the robbery, but without result. Dunstan Cass's absence excited little remark, and it occurred to no one to connect it with the robbery. But although the thief was not discovered, a good deal of bickering took place between those who thought that the pedlar and the tinder-box might afford a clue and those who considered the robbery an insoluble mystery, probably due to some supernatural agency.

But Silas Marner's life, which, since he came to Raveloe, had been passed in the eager pursuit of gold, was now a blank. He had no heart to begin hoarding money again. Sitting at his loom in the daytime, or by his lonely fireside at night, he would moan wearily from time to time, as the memory of his loss recurred to him, as one without hope.

But his misfortune had wrought a change in the feeling of the villagers towards him. They no longer regarded him as a malignant being in league with the evil one, but as a poor half-crazed creature. His richer neighbours sent him presents of food now and then, and the humbler villagers would talk to him about his loss, when they met him on the road, or even take the trouble to visit him at his cottage. Among the latter were Mr. Macey, the parish clerk, and Mrs. Winthrop, the wheelwright's wife. The former told Silas that, in his opinion, he was not so bad as he looked, and advised him to keep up his spirits, and buy a suit of decent clothes to attend church in on Sundays. The latter brought her little boy Aaron to sing Christmas carols to him, and offered to look after the cottage for him while he went to church, trying to instil into his poor benumbed heart her own simple religious faith. Silas did not feel much interest in her kindly talk, though he thanked her for coming to see him. He spent his Christmas Day in solitary quiet, sitting in his desolate home, while others, having attended the church service in the morning, felt themselves free to indulge in the festivities of the season for the rest of the day.

At Squire Cass's the usual family party assembled and played cards together. But the great event at the Red House was the big dance on New Year's Eve, and to this

Godfrey looked forward eagerly, hoping to see and dance with Nancy Lammeter, in spite of the anxious thoughts that troubled him with reference to his neglected wife, and her possible disclosure of his unfortunate marriage to the Squire if he should be unable to supply her with the money she needed.

22. *capacious mind* : great intellect.

*seeing that* : since.

23. *draw much wider conclusions* : make much greater inferences.

25. *on the Commission of the Peace* : (who were not) honorary magistrates.

26. *the clue of* : the hint afforded by.

27. *set on foot* : commenced.

29. *cutlery* : knives and other cutting instruments.

30-3. *either because . . . among them* : either because he had gone away before his place of residence could be ascertained, or because the description of his appearance was too general (not sufficiently detailed).

35. *cessation* : subsidence.

PAGE 80. 1. *a subject of remark* : noticed.

2. *gone off* : disappeared.

*whither* : where.

3. *to return* : returning.

*take up his old quarters* : to occupy his former rooms in the Squire's house.

4. *swagger* : to brag, to boast.

5. *issue* : result, end of the episode.

13. *lay . . . thought* : did not occur to any one.

14-15. *who had . . . capable of* : who had had more experience of his brother's evil doings than any one else.

18. *deride* : ridicule, make fun of.

18-19. *besides . . . Dunstan* : moreover, he always thought of Dunstan as being in a place very different from the stone-pits.

19. *alibi* : a plea of having been at another place at the time that an offence is alleged to have been committed.

*saw him* : saw him in his mind's eye, imagined him.

20. *some congenial haunt* : some place suitable to his habits and disposition.

21-2. *sponging on chance acquaintances* : planting himself upon and getting money by base flattery from those whom he met by chance.



22. *meditating a return* : intending to return.

23. *his elder brother* : Godfrey.

23-8. *Even if . . . unsound tendency* : even if it had occurred to any one in Raveloe to connect the robbery of Silas Marner with the disappearance of Dunstan, it is doubtful whether such a suggestion would not have been repressed as indicating a wrong spirit in view of the unassailable respectability of a family like that of Squire Cass—a respectability vouched for by a tablet on the wall of the parish church, and by ancient drinking-vessels.

28-32. *But Christmas puddings . . . waking thought* : but Christmas fare, pig's flesh, and intoxicating drinks, while they stimulate activity and originality of thought in horrible dreams, are a great check upon excessive mental energy in one's waking moments.

34-7. *the balance . . . investigation* : the opinion of the majority hesitated between the logical clue afforded by the tinder-box, and regarding the whole affair as a deep mystery that defied inquiry.

37-8. *The advocates . . . view* : those who thought that the pedlar and tinder-box had some connexion with the robbery.

39. *a muddle-headed and credulous set* : a stupid set of people, easily deceived.

40. *wall-eyed* : a popular name for the disease of the eye called 'glaucoma', blind.

PAGE 81. 1. *to have the same blank outlook* : to be in the same condition.

1-7. *and the adherents . . . through it* : and those who held the robbery to be an insoluble mystery made known in no uncertain fashion their opinion that their opponents were disposed to boast before they had discovered anything. men of very superficial views, who supposed that nothing existed beyond their own narrow outlook.

8. *to elicit . . . robbery* : to discover the perpetrator of the crime.

8-9. *it elicited some true opinions of collateral importance* : it indirectly served the important purpose of bringing out people's opinions of one another.

10-11. *to brush the slow . . . conversation* : to stimulate the dull flow of, &c.

12. *withering . . . bereavement* : blighting despair caused by that loss.

13. *arguing at their ease* : comfortably talking.

15-18. *that so withered . . . altogether* : that any injury or loss to such a blighted and narrow nature would destroy it altogether.

19. *an immediate purpose* : a direct object.

19-20. *which fenced . . . unknown* : which protected him from the big unsympathetic world outside his own interests.

21. *clinging* : dependent.

21-2. *round . . . clung* : on which its interest had centred.

22. *a dead disrupted thing* : a lifeless, isolated thing, viz. the money which he saved instead of using it for any useful purpose.

23. *clinging* : support of some kind.

23-4. *But now . . . away* : but now that which had maintained his interest in life, and given him an object to live for, was gone.

25. *move . . . round* : travel in their accustomed circuit.

26. *were . . . blank* : suffered a puzzling interruption.

29-30. *the bright treasure in the hole under his feet* : the bright gold buried beneath the floor under the loom.

31-2. *the evening . . . craving* : the evening held out no splendid vision to satisfy the poor fellow's longing.

34. *its meagre image* : the thought of its small amount.

35-7. *and hope . . . beginning* : he was so filled with despair at the sudden loss of his hoard, that he could not bear to think of making a fresh start and beginning to save money once again.

38. *He filled up the blank with grief* : sad thoughts now occupied his mind instead of the former pleasant reflections upon the increase of his hoard. Cf. Shakespeare's *King John*, III. iv. 93.

40-82. 1. *had come round again to the sudden chasm* : had again recurred to the break in his life so suddenly effected by the loss of the money.

PAGE 82. 7-9. *The repulsion . . . him* : the aspect which Silas Marner presented as a fellow creature in distress came as a revelation to those who had formerly disliked him.

10. *who had . . . come by* : who had magic powers derived from Satan.

12. *neighbourly* : friendly way, as might be expected from a neighbour.

13. *had not . . . his own*: was not clever enough to preserve his own property.

14. '*mushed*': see p. 60, l. 20.

17. *to worse company*: that of the evil one.

*mere craziness*: only weakness of mind.

20. *when superfluous . . . families*: an excess of supplies of food in wealthy families suggests the distribution of some of it to the poor.

22-3. *had brought . . . memory*: had made him the first to be remembered.

27. *enforced . . . pettitoes*: removed any impression of severity his remarks might have occasioned by presenting Silas Marner with some pigs' feet.

28-9. *well calculated . . . character*: such a gift was very likely to remove any unreasonable dislike to clergy, men.

30. *verbal consolation to give*: sympathetic words to bestow.

32. *encountered*: met.

34. *getting*: inducing, persuading.

36. *nor*: than.

37. *you was to be crippled*: you were to become infirm, and unable to support yourself by your own efforts.

38. '*lowance*': allowance, a certain sum of money payable at regular intervals and sufficient to support life.

PAGE 83. 1-2. *our goodwill . . . lips*: in spite of our good intentions, our kindly feeling becomes mingled with other thoughts of a less praiseworthy nature before it is expressed.

3. *without . . . egoism*: without any suggestion of vanity or conceit.

4-5. *language is . . . soil*: but verbal consolation is almost certain to express other feelings than pure benevolence.

5. *proportion*: amount.

6-7. *of a beery and bungling sort*: of a tactless and awkward nature, what one would expect from people addicted to drinking much beer and so careless in their conversation.

7-8. *and took the shape . . . hypocritical*: and was as far as possible removed from flattery.

9-10. *expressly, to let Silas know*: with the set purpose of informing Silas.

10. *recent events . . . lightly* : his recent misfortunes had benefited him by raising him in the estimation of a man (Mr. Macey) whose opinions were only formed after careful consideration.

13. *opened* : commenced.

14. *adjusted his thumbs* : put his thumbs in their usual position.

15. *you've no call . . . moaning* : you have no reason to sit groaning.

16-17. *You're a deal . . . foul means* : it is much better for you to have lost your money than to have preserved it by evil means.

18-19. *as you . . . should be* : that you were no better than you ought to be.

19. *younger a deal* : much younger.

22. *there's no knowing* : it is impossible to judge by appearances.

22-3. *it isn't . . . making of* : the devil is not responsible for every strange-looking creature.

25. *like* : as it were.

*varmin* : vermin, noxious insects.

25-6. *And it's pretty much . . . see* : and as far as I can tell, you too are harmless in spite of your strange appearance.

27. *yarbs* : herbs.

*stuff* : medicine.

29. *you might . . . of it* : you might have been a little more generous in imparting it.

29-30. *And if the knowledge . . . by* : and if the knowledge was derived from some evil source.

31. *made up* : atoned.

31-4. *as for the children . . . just as well* : for I have frequently been present at the baptism of children whom the witch had cured, and they went through the ceremony of being sprinkled with water just as well as children with whom the witch had nothing to do.

35-6. *if Old Harry . . . against it?* what objection can any one make if the evil one sometimes wishes to do a little kindness for a change?

38-9. *does the cussing of a Ash-Wednesday* : pronounce curses against evildoers on the first day of Lent.

39-40. *there's no cussing . . . doctor* : no curses are pronounced against those who wish to be cured by supernatural means.

40-84. 1. *let Kimble . . . will*: in spite of anything Dr. Kimble may say to the contrary.

PAGE 84. 2. *for there's windings . . . to 'em*: for one thing leads on to another until one is very far indeed from the main topic of one's conversation.

5-7. *for as for thinking . . . at all*: for I do not at all share the opinion that you are a person who conceals his thoughts because they will not bear the light of day, i. e. a person who loves concealment because his deeds are evil.

8. *making out a tale*: inventing a story.

9-10. *it 'ud take . . . that*: it would require a clever man to invent a story of that kind.

10. *he*: i. e. Silas Marner.

*scared*: terrified.

11. *discursive*: rambling, wandering.

15. *some appreciatory reply*: some answer expressing agreement with what he had just said, expressing approval of his remarks.

16. *He had a sense*: he perceived.

17. *neighbourly*: see p. 82, l. 12.

19-20. *he had no heart . . . off him*: he had no desire to benefit by it, and regarded it as having nothing to do with him.

28. *a Sunday suit*: a suit of clothes fit to wear on Sundays. People in England usually wear their best clothes on Sundays.

30. *doubted*: suspected.

32. *a poor creature*: a miserable specimen of humanity.

34. *trust*: credit.

35. *and be a bit neighbourly*: and be a little friendly.

37-8. *it'll be poor work . . . to himself*: it will be badly done when Tooke says it all by himself.

39. *equil*: able.

*come another winter*: when another winter comes, next winter.

PAGE 85. 3. *a matter of a pound a-week*: a sum equal to about a pound a week.

4-5. *for all you look so mused*: although you look so depressed.

9. *it's a long while since*: it's a long time ago.

12-13. *all of a muddle*: quite confused.

14. *when Sunday came round*: when it was Sunday.  
*which showed him*: which proved him to be.

17-18. *highly charged . . . topic*: full of the same subject.

19-20. *severely . . . churchgoing*: very regular in their attendance at church.

22. *in the calendar*: in the year.

23. *a greedy . . . Heaven*: a selfish wish to secure the favour of God.

24. *undue*: unfair.

25. *the 'common run'*: ordinary people.

25-7. *that would . . . as themselves*: which would indicate some disparagement of those who had been baptized like themselves.

27-8. *and had . . . burying-service*: and had as good a right to be buried in consecrated ground as they had. An infant is admitted to the Church of England at the ceremony of baptism, at which the 'godfather' and 'god-mother' act as sponsors, i.e. promise to attend to the child's religious education.

When a baptized child dies, it is buried in consecrated ground. The sentence therefore means that the inhabitants of Raveloe would have resented a too regular attendance at church on the part of any one as an attempt to secure an unfair advantage over other church members.

29-30. *household servants*: domestic servants.

30. *the sacrament*: the ceremony of 'Holy Communion', when bread and wine are taken in memory of the body and blood of Christ.

31. *took it*: partook of the sacrament.

33. *'good livers'*: religious persons.

36. *a woman of scrupulous conscience*: a very conscientious woman.

38-9. *though this . . . morning*: although this habit (of rising at half-past four in the morning) left her with too little to do in the forenoon.

40. *which . . . to remove*: and this was a difficulty she was always trying to solve.

PAGE 86. 1. *the vixenish temper*: the scolding disposition.

2. *to be . . . habits*: to an invariable accompaniment of habits of early rising.

5. *pasture . . . them* : feed her mind upon them ; meditate upon them.

7. *leeches* : worms which suck the blood of a patient and so reduce fever.

8-9. *there was . . . monthly nurse* : or when a midwife unexpectedly failed to come when required.

9. '*comfortable*' : stoutish.

10. *fresh-complexioned* : with pink cheeks.

11. *screwed* : pursed.

13. *whimpering* : whining.

14. *grave* : serious.

15. *imperceptibly* : so slightly as hardly to be noticeable.

15-16. *like . . . a relation* : like a mourner at a funeral who is not a relative of the deceased.

17. *who loved . . . joke* : who loved to jest and drink beer.

17-18. *got along so well* : was on such good terms with.

18. *took* : endured.

21. *in the light of* : as.

23. *turkey-cocks* : Hindustani, 'pāru.'

24. *wholesome* : healthy-minded.

25. *her mind drawn strongly* : her sympathy strongly attracted.

28. *to call on* : to pay a visit to.

29. *lard-cakes* : cakes prepared with clarified fat.

*paste-like* : resembling dough, a mixture of flour and water.

30. *apple-cheeked* : rosy-checked, red-faced.

*youngster* : child.

31. *frill* : a ruffle round the neck.

32-4. *needed . . . injury* : required all his love of exciting adventures to overcome his fear that the weaver with the large staring eyes might do him some harm.

35. *dubiety* : timorous hesitation.

36-7. *the mysterious . . . loom* : the strange throbbing noise made by the weaving-machine.

38. Mrs. Winthrop was sad to find Silas Marner working on Sunday.

40. *impatience* : irritation.

PAGE 87. 2-5. Once he had nourished in his heart a secret joy, the thought of his hoarded gold ; but now his heart was emptied of delight, and his misery was evident for all to see.

5. *groping in darkness* : in dull despair, seeking in vain

for any help, like a person trying to feel his way in the dark.

5-6. *prop*: support.

6-8. *Silas . . . without*: it was natural that Silas should feel, though in a confused, almost hopeless fashion, that only external assistance could avail him now.

9. *stirring*: awakoning of a feeling (of expectancy).

10. *a faint . . . goodwill*: a feeble perception that he must rely on their kind feeling for assistance.

12. *returning her greeting*: acknowledging her salutation.

17. *I'd a baking yesterday*: I baked some cakes yesterday.

18. *nor common*: than usual.

19. *if you thought well*: if you cared to do so.

21-2. *men's stomichs are made so comical*: men's appetites are constituted so strangely.

25. *kindly*: cordially.

26. *absently*: in an absent-minded way.

27. *eyed*: watched.

28. *orbs*: eyes.

28-9. *outwork*: a rampart, or defence.

29-30. *and was peeping . . . it*: and was taking sly, cautious glances from the shelter it afforded.

31. *There's letters pricked on 'em*: some letters have been stamped upon them.

34-5. *pulpit-cloth*: the cloth hung in front of the platform on which the priest preaches.

39. *a stamp*: an instrument for impressing the letters on a soft substance like an unbaked cake.

PAGE 88. 1. *allays*: always.

3. *I.H.S.*: generally explained as a contraction for *Iesus Hominum Salvator*=Jesus the saviour of men. Some say it stands for *I.H.Σ.*, a contraction of the name Jesus in Greek.

5. *to be sure*: indeed.

*you can read 'em off*: you can read the letters easily.

7. *the more's the pity*: and it is the more unfortunate.

9. *prick 'em*: mark them, stamp them.

10. *they won't hold*: they don't remain.

10-11. *because o' the rising*: owing to the swelling of the paste.

12. *that we have*: we have indeed.



13-14. *wi' that will*: with that intention.

15. *have held better nor common*: have remained clearly visible, more than they generally do.

21. *absently*: as if unconscious of his surroundings.

21-4. *dreadily unconscious . . . tend for him*: sadly ignorant of any help that cake, or letters, or Dolly's goodwill would tend to bring him.

26-7. *who did not . . . phrase*: who, when she had once found an expression which served her purpose, did not easily give it up.

29. *I doubt*: I fear.

30. *you lose your count*: you forget the day of the week.

31. *I daresay*: I suppose.

32-3. *more partic'lar . . . kills the sound*: more especially now that the frost makes sounds indistinct.

35. *accident of*: incident of.

36. *There had . . . Yard*: there had been no church bells in the chapel which Silas had attended at Lantern Yard in the great manufacturing town, as a young man.

37. *Dear heart!*: an exclamation of pity or compassion.

38-9. *of a Sunday*: on Sundays.

*clean yourself*: wash yourself.

40. *if you'd a roasting bit*: if you had a piece of meat to be roasted.

40-89. 1. *it might be . . . man*: you might not be able to leave it since you live alone.

PAGE 89. 1-2. *But there's the bakehus*: but the bakehouse is available.

2. *bakehus*: a bakery or place where food is cooked for the public for a small fee.

4. *in course*: of course.

5-6. *for it's nothing . . . Sunday*: for it is only right to have a hot meal on Sundays.

7-8. *not to make it . . . Saturday*: to make some difference between your Saturday dinner and your Sunday dinner.

9. *as is ever coming*: which is now about to come.

11. *the holly*: an evergreen shrub with prickly leaves and red berries.

*the yew*: a kind of pine-tree with dark green spreading branches.

11. *the anthem*: the anthem, a sacred song sung in parts, interspersed with solos.

12. *you'd be a deal the better*: you would be much improved.

12-13. *you'd know . . . stood on*: you would know where you stood.

13-15. *you could put . . . all to do*: you could rely on Him who knows better than we do, since you would have done what it is the duty of us all to do.

16-17. *which was . . . for her*: which was a longer speech than she usually made.

19. *to prevail on*: to induce.

20. *gruel*: light and easily digested food, made from oatmeal boiled in water or milk.

21. *closely urged on the point of his absence*: earnestly exhorted in the matter of his non-attendance at church.

22-3. *which had only . . . queerness*: which had been regarded merely as a particular example of his general eccentricity.

23. *direct*: honest.

24. *to evade Dolly's appeal*: to avoid giving a straightforward answer to Dolly's exhortation.

27. *wonderment*: surprise.

28-9. *bethinking herself . . . country*: remembering that Silas had come to Raveloe from a strange district.

33. *a many*: a large number, many of them.

34. *of 'em*: that is 'of the churches'.

*I went to chapel*: I used to attend divine service at chapel. A chapel is a place of worship frequented by Dissenters—those who do not accept the doctrines and ceremonies of the Established Church of England.

35. *puzzled . . . word*: perplexed by this unfamiliar word—'chapel'.

37. *haunt of wickedness*: abode of vice.

39-40. *'to turn over a new leaf'*: to begin again and try to do better.

PAGE 90. 1. *there's no telling . . . you*: it is impossible to say how much good it will do you.

1-2. *For I feel . . . niver was*: for I feel more strengthened and comforted than ever.

4. *as Mr. Macey gives out*: which Mr. Macey recites.

5. *more partic'lar*: more especially.

6-7. *as I can put up with it*: that I can endure it.

7. *quarter* : direction.

8-9. *and gev . . . at the last* : and surrendered my will to God, to whom we must commit ourselves at the time of death.

9. *our part* : our duty.

9-11. *it isn't . . . theirs* : it is incredible that God above us will be worse than we are, and fail in His duty.

12. *exposition* : explanation.

*theology* : faith, religious belief.

13. *fell . . . ears* : did not convey much meaning to Silas Marner.

15-16. *his comprehension . . . plural pronoun* : and he was puzzled by the use of 'Their' and 'Them', instead of 'His' and 'Him', with reference to God.

16-18. *which was . . . familiarity* : which was not due to any religious error on Dolly's part, but to her anxiety to show a proper reverence in speaking of the Deity.

23. *transaction* : carrying on.

24-5. *without . . . purpose* : unless under the stress of necessity; except to express some urgent need.

30. *shrank back* : recoiled, retreated.

34. *for shame* = fie for shame : an expression of disapproval, equivalent to 'you ought to be ashamed of yourself'.

34-5. *taking . . . lap* : putting him on her knee.

36. *yet awhile* : for some time yet.

*wonderful hearty* : remarkably healthy.

38. *we spoil him* : we indulge him.

PAGE 91. 1. *a 'pictur of a child'* : such a beautiful child.

3. *neat-featured* : handsome.

*round* : circle.

4. *with two dark spots* : to Silas, Aaron's eyes appeared as two dark spots, because he was short-sighted.

6. *carril* = carol : a hymn of joy sung at Christmas time in memory of the birth of Christ.

7. *I take . . . token* : I consider it as a sign.

8. *as he'll . . . good* : that he'll turn out well.

*as he can learn, &c.* : because he can, &c.

15. *till you've done* : until you have finished singing.

16. *indisposed* : unwilling.

17. *to an ogre* : a man-eating monster—as he considered Silas Marner to be.

17. *under protecting circumstances* : when his mother was there to protect him.

18. *coyness* : shyness.

19-20. *then peeping between them* : then looking slyly and cautiously (at Mr. Marner) between his fingers.

22. *duly adjusted* : placed at the proper angle.

23-4. *which let him . . . frill* : above which only his head and broad neck-ruffle appeared.

— *cherubic head* : the head of a cherub, or child angel.

25. *with a clear chirp* : in a pure shrill voice.

26. *the rhythm of an industrious hammer* : a monotonous accent, like the measured beat of a hammer used without pause or cessation.

*hammer* : Hindustani, 'hatora.'

32. *in some confidence* : with some assurance.

*strain* : song.

*allure* : attract, entice.

36-7. '*Hark . . . sing*' = 'Hark! the herald angels sing' : the first line of a Christmas hymn.

37. *you may judge what it is* : you may guess what it is like.

38. *bassoon* : a brass musical instrument, used to produce bass or deep notes.

39. *as* : that.

39-92. 1. *a better place* : heaven, paradise.

PAGE 92. 1. *a'ready* : already.

1-2. *for I wouldn't . . . best* : I do not wish to disparage this world, since God, who placed us in it, knows better than we do what is good for us.

4. *hard dying* : painful deaths.

*as I've . . . times* : which I have witnessed on many occasions.

5. *a better* : a better world.

*pretty* : prettily.

10. *could have . . . effect* : could not produce any of the good effect.

*contemplated* : anticipated.

17. *anyways* : at all.

17-18. *bad in your inside* : unwell in your stomach.

*fend for yourself* : look after yourself, take care of yourself.

19. *clean up* : make the place tidy for you.

*get . . . victual* : prepare a little food for you.

20. *and willing* : and I shall be very glad to do so.

20-1. *to leave off . . . Sunday* : to cease weaving on Sundays.

22-3. *'ull be . . . last* : will trouble your thoughts when you lie on your death-bed.

23-4. *if it . . . frost* : if it does not disappear, nobody can say where, like the hoar-frost.

24-5. *being . . . you* : speaking so frankly to you.

30. *at his ease* : without being disturbed.

33. *fashion* : conceive.

33-7. *The fountains . . . obstruction* : his mean ambition—to hoard money—was now removed, and his warped and shrivelled life was now beset with dark perplexity. Otherwise there was no change. He had not recovered faith in God, or love for man.

PAGE 93. 1-2. *a neighbourly present* : a gift from a friendly neighbour.

2-3. *the black frost* : a more intense frost than the hoar or white frost.

4. *shivered* : trembled.

6. *curtained* : hid.

*outlook* : view.

7. *shutting . . . grief* : confining him to his room with no companionship but his own sad thoughts.

8. *livelong* : whole.

10-11. *till the cold . . . grey* : till the cold gripped him, and he perceived that his fire had gone out.

14. *unseen goodness* : the goodness of an invisible God.

15. *Even to himself . . . dim* : he himself had almost forgotten that former state of mind.

18. *the abundant dark-green boughs* : the church was decorated for the Christmas service with sprigs of holly and other evergreen shrubs.

20. *odorous* : having a pleasant smell.

*toast* : bread dried before a fire until the surface becomes brown.

22. *the Athanasian Creed* : a confession of Christian faith, commonly called the creed of St. Athanasius, repeated on Christmas Day and on the occasion of other Church festivals.

*discriminated* : distinguished.

23. *from the others* : from the other creeds.

25. *a vague exulting sense* : an ill-defined feeling of joy.

25-6. *for which . . . children* : which the adults present would have found as hard to explain as the children.

29. *appropriating* : taking advantage of, making their own.

*the red faces* : i. e. the rosy-faced villagers.

30. *biting* : sharp, cutting.

33. *without diffidence* : without stint, in no restrained fashion.

38-9. *was carried through . . . omissions* : went on exactly as usual.

39-40. *rising to . . . back* : reaching its most interesting point with Mr. Kimble's description of his adventures, when he had studied cases of sickness in the London hospitals, as a medical student, thirty years ago.

PAGE 94. 1. *striking professional anecdotes* : interesting medical stories.

2. *Whereupon cards followed* : and after this they played at cards.

2-3. *with aunt Kimble's . . . suit* : every year aunt Kimble used to 'revoke' at cards, i. e. she did not play a card of the same kind as was 'led', although she had one or more such cards in her hand.

3-7. *uncle Kimble's . . . principles* : and every year, at the Squire's family Christmas party, uncle Kimble failed to see how his opponents could have won the odd trick, and insisted on examining every trick that had been played, to make certain that no mistake had been made.

7-8. *the whole . . . spirits-and-water* : and all the time, they were playing cards a strong smell arose from the whisky mingled with hot water which the company drank at intervals.

9-10. *being a strictly family party* : being confined to the members of Squire Cass's family, and to his near relatives.

10-11. *was not the pre-cminently . . . season* : was not the chief social function of the Christmas season.

12. *New Year's Eve* : the evening before New Year's Day, the evening of December 31.

*made the glory* : marked the climax.

13-14. *time out of mind* : from time immemorial.

14-20. *This was the occasion . . . appropriateness* : to this event all the gentry of Raveloe and Tarley looked

forward, expecting to meet each other and to behave on either side in a becoming manner, whether they were old friends separated by long country roads in a bad state of repair, or friends who had quarrelled about the ownership of strayed calves, or people who, being of unequal social standing, only met at rare intervals as superior and inferior.

21. *fair dames* : beautiful ladies.

22. *pillions* : cushions placed on horseback behind the saddle of the riders. Ladies used to sit on these pillions behind their husbands or male relatives.

*bandboxes* : boxes made of cardboard for holding hats or other light articles.

*supplied with* : containing.

23. *costume* : dress.

24. *paltry* : petty, insignificant.

25. *eatables* : victuals.

26. *bedding is scanty* : beds for guests are few.

27. *provisioned* : supplied with stores of food.

28. *spare* : additional, extra.

30. *that had killed . . . generations* : kept its own live stock for food, instead of purchasing it at shops, from father to son throughout a long period.

33. *his importunate . . . Anxiety* : his persistent anxious thoughts.

35. *blow-up* : outburst of anger.

*his spite* : his malignant nature.

40. *in spite of herself* : in spite of her determination to treat me with coldness or reserve.

PAGE 95. 1. *in another quarter* : in another direction, i.e. for his wife Molly.

1-2. *said . . . voice* : his anxious thoughts insisted.

3-4. *And if . . . ?* : and if you do not find the money, what will the consequence be ? Will not your wife Molly come and denounce you before the Squire and the assembled guests ?

5-6. *something . . . easier* : Godfrey answered his own anxious thoughts by saying, 'Perhaps some lucky chance may save the situation, or render it less unpleasant.'

8-10. *and suppose . . . reasons ?* : and suppose your father should so urge his proposal for your marriage with Nancy Lammeter that you are obliged to refuse to marry her, and confess that you are married already ?

11. *Hold your tongue . . . me* : Godfrey bids his anxious thoughts to be silent and not trouble him.

14-15. *But Anxiety . . . company* : but his anxious thoughts continued though he was surrounded by noisy companions celebrating the Christmas festivities.

15-16. *refusing . . . drinking* : and he could not silence his anxious thoughts even by drinking heavily.

## CHAPTER XI.

SUMMARY.—On New Year's Eve Nancy Lammeter sat behind her father on a pillion as he rode toward the Red House. On their arrival she perceived, with some embarrassment, that Godfrey Cass was standing ready to lift her down from the horse. Snow was falling, and she was glad of an excuse to hurry into the house, where she was met by Mrs. Kimble, the Squire's sister and doctor's wife. In almost every bedroom in the house ladies were making their toilette in preparation for the ball. Among the company in the room into which Nancy was ushered were the Miss Gunns, the vulgar and showily dressed daughters of a wine merchant from the neighbouring town of Lytherly. They looked at Miss Nancy with feelings in which surprise at her beauty was not unmixed with disdain at her rough hands and rustic speech. Nevertheless, Nancy Lammeter, little educated as she was, possessed the essential qualities of a lady—perfect truthfulness, a high standard of honour, self-respect and respect for others—although she was a little proud and hard to please at times, and as devoted to a mistaken opinion as she was, at heart, to her erring lover. When her sister Priscilla arrived, she playfully complained of Nancy's insisting upon them both being dressed alike, although what suited the pretty pink complexion of Nancy only threw into stronger relief the plainness of her less attractive sister. Priscilla, however, tried to console herself and the Miss Gunns (who by no means appreciated her candour) for being plain, by saying that the pretty girls diverted the attention of the men from the ugly ones, a fact which was entirely to her liking, since she had but a poor opinion of men, and thought marriage suitable for girls in poor circumstances with no one to take care of them. She herself was quite content to remain single, she said, preferring her liberty to subjection to a husband. Once the ladies had entered the parlour, com-



pliments and jokes were freely exchanged, and the Squire was particularly loud in his praise of Nancy Lammeter's beauty, as if he would atone for his son's backwardness. Godfrey was reticent, not only out of respect for the feelings of Nancy, whom he revered as well as loved, but because he realized that the fact of his secret marriage should prevent him, as a man of honour, from letting her see the state of his feelings towards her. But common politeness demanded that he should ask her to dance with him, and under the influence of her beauty and the intoxication of the dance, he grew reckless, cast aside all scruple, and seized the opportunity of her withdrawal to another room in order to repair a slight accident to her dress, to utter words which revealed in scarcely veiled terms his passion for her. But Nancy concealed her agitation, and gave him to understand that she could not encourage his suit until his conduct showed some sign of improvement, and his affection became more constant. For it was commonly reported that he led a bad life, and, being unaware of his marriage, she could not understand his strange behaviour in taking no notice of her for weeks and then all of a sudden almost making love to her.

17. *I grant*: I admit.

*would not appear to advantage*: would not look their best.

18. *pillion*: a cushion placed behind the rider's saddle for another person, usually a woman.

*attired in a drab joseph*: dressed in a grey overcoat with capes.

18-19. *a drab beaver-bonnet*: a head-dress of dull brown fur made of beaver skin.

19. *a crown . . . pan*: top like a little dish used for cooking purposes.

20. *suggesting*: resembling.

20-1. *cut out . . . cloth*: cut out with insufficient cloth.

21-2. *that would only . . . capes*: which would not permit the cape (covering for the shoulders) to be of the right size.

22-3. *deficiencies of contour*: an imperfect figure.

23-4. *that will throw . . . contrast*: that will enliven the colour of yellow cheeks.

25-6. *thoroughly bewitching*: perfectly charming.

27. *erect*: straight.

28. *open-eyed anxiety*: wide-eyed fear.

✓ 29. *treacherous . . . puddles* : deceitful little pools of muddy water concealed under the snow.

31. *Dobbin* : the name of the horse her father was riding.

✓ 32-3. *free . . . consciousness* : not thinking of herself.

33-5. *the bloom . . . drab* : the rosy colour of her cheeks was as different as possible from the dull brown colour of her hat and her dress.

PAGE 96. 2-3. *come up* : arrived.

4. *contrived* : managed.

4-5. *lifted off Priscilla* : lifted Priscilla down from her horse.

✓ 6. *horseblock* : a small stone platform, with several steps, from which to mount or dismount from a horse.

8. The word 'you' in this sentence may be turned into the third person.

9. *you were* : she was, &c.

11. *to pay . . . attentions* : to take especial notice of her.

16. *making love* : paying court.

23. *country-side* : neighbourhood.

24. *hot and hasty* : irritable and quick-tempered.

25. *to the minute* : exactly when he wanted them.

31. *under cover of this noise* : while the attention of other people was distracted by this noise.

31-3. *she seemed . . . behaviour* : she felt that her modest shyness and the absence on her part of any appropriately prim behaviour passed unnoticed.

34. *strong arms* : those of Godfrey Cass.

35. *ridiculously* : absurdly.

38-9. *as were . . . road* : as had not yet arrived.

✓ 39. *These . . . minority* : those who had not yet arrived were very few indeed.

40. *afternoon . . . decline* : it was beginning to grow dusk.

PAGE 97. 3. *inspirit them* : invigorate.

4. *a buzz* : a hum.

✓ 5-6. *the scrape . . . kitchen* : the discordant sound of a violin being tuned in the cooking-room.

7. *thought . . . much* : considered of so much importance.

9. *who did the honours* : who acted as hostess and received the guests.

13-14. *a double dignity . . . proportion* : a twofold

honour with which the stoutness of her figure was in exact correspondence.

20. *where feminine compliments . . . passing* : where ladies were not making flattering remarks to one another.

20-1. *and feminine . . . stages* : and dressing.

21-2. *in space . . . floor* : on floors which had been reduced in size by additional beds placed there for expected guests.

24. *curtsy* : bending the knees to denote respect.

28. *shortest waists* : very high waists.

29-30. *not unsustained . . . criticism* : against which she fortified herself by certain mental strictures upon the propriety of the Miss Gunns' costumes.

31. *unduly lax* : too wide.

35. *by stopping . . . fashion* : by not dressing in the extreme of fashion.

36. *skullcap* : small cap fitting closely to the head.

*front* : false hair, *toupé*.

37. *turban* : head-dress. She had not finished dressing.

*blandly* : gently.

39. *in similar circumstances* : like herself in process of making her toilette.

39-40. *who had . . . looking-glass* : who had politely offered to give up her place to her in front of the mirror.

PAGE 98. 3. *kerchief* : neckcloth.

*mob-cap* : a small cap worn by elderly ladies.

4. *were in daring contrast with* : were markedly different from.

4-5. *puffed . . . satins* : full dresses of yellow satin.

*satin* : a woven silk material with a glossy surface.

6. *primness* : formality.

7. *a slow, treble suavity* : in a high-toned yet slow and gentle voice.

10. *amiable primness* : formal politeness.

25. *an out-of-the-way country place* : a remote rustic spot.

28-30. *whose thoughts . . . manner* : whose manners only reflected the habitual self-restraint and good feeling of her thoughts.

30. *remarked to herself* : reflected.

31. *hard-featured* : harsh-featured, plain.

31-2. *low dresses* : low-necked dresses.

36-7. *from some . . . modesty* : from some necessity not opposed to good sense and nice feeling.

39. *mind* : opinions.

PAGE 99. 1. *kinship . . . side* : considering that she was related by blood to Mr. Osgood, not to her aunt, his wife.

4. *between aunt and niece* : i. e. between Mrs. Osgood and Nancy Lammeter.

5. *refusal of her cousin* : refusal to marry her cousin.

7. *cooled the preference* : diminished the affection.

8. *determined her* : caused her to resolve.

9. *hereditary ornaments* : heirlooms.

9-10. *let . . . might* : whomever her nephew Gilbert might marry.

14. *the rustic . . . toilette* : the dress of the beautiful country girl.

16. *lavender* : a sweet-scented plant and flower.

17. *clasping* : fastening.

19. *nattiness* : neatness.

20. *not a crease . . . to be* : none of her garments were folded except in the right place.

20-2. *not a bit . . . profession* : all her white linen garments were really white.

22. *the very pins* : even the pins.

23-4. *from which . . . aberration* : which she was careful never to alter.

26. *cropped* : cut short.

27. *dressed* : arranged.

29. *coiffure* : mode of hairdressing.

31. *complete* : fully dressed.

31-2. *silvery twilled silk* : ribbed silk dress of a silver colour.

32. *tucker* : piece of cloth worn over the front of a dress.

*coral* : a hard substance composed of the skeletons of very minute sea-creatures, much used for ornament.

33. *ear-drops* : ear-rings.

34. *criticise* : find fault with.

35-6. *coarser work* : harder, rougher work.

PAGE 100. 5. *stiffly, primly*.

12. *who habitually said 'orse*. It was of course just as vulgar for the Miss Gunns to say 'orse' as for Miss Lammeter to say 'oss', but they were as blind to their own defects as they were alive to hers.

13. *and only said 'appen on the right occasions*: the Miss Gunns said 'appen', dropping the 'h', but otherwise using the word correctly in the sense of 'to take place', 'to occur'; while Nancy Lammeter used the word 'appen' when we should say 'perhaps'.

13-14. *was necessarily shocking*: this is of course ironical.

15. *Dame Tedman's*: a dame's school is one kept by an old lady.

16. *profane literature*: secular learning.

17. *she had . . . sampler*: she had stitched on a piece of embroidered canvas.

18-19. *to balance an account*: to find what sum remained over after paying a debt.

20. She was ignorant of the most elementary rules of arithmetic, and could not do compound subtraction.

22. *who is . . . informed*: who has not received more instruction.

24. *high veracity*: strict truthfulness.

*delicate . . . dealings*: a refined sense of honour in her treatment of others.

25. *deference*: respect.

*refined personal habits*: ladylike manners.

26-30. *lest these . . . erring lover*: and if this enumeration of her qualities is not enough to persuade well-educated ladies that her feelings were in any way similar to their own, it may be added that she was rather haughty and hard to please, and as firm in her devotion to a mistaken opinion as in her constancy to a lover who had fallen into evil ways.

34. *blowsy*: red.

37. *wheeled*: turned.

37-8. *the back . . . faultless*: that she looked equally well from behind.

40. *to unrobe*: to take off her travelling dress.

PAGE 101. 2. *with . . . formality*: in a somewhat more severe tone.

3. *rough*: unpolished, plain-spoken.

5. *for all*: although.

*yellow*: yellow.

6. *without*: unless.

8-10. *And I tell her . . . pretty in*: and I tell her people will think that we dress alike because I am so silly as to think that what will suit her will suit me.

10-11. *I feature my father's family*: my features resemble those of my father's family.

11. *I don't mind*: the fact that I am ugly does not trouble me.

*do you?* here the plain-spoken Prisoilla asks the Miss Gunns if they mind being ugly!

12-14. *rattling on . . . appreciated*: talking on with so much pleasure in the sound of her own voice that she did not notice that her frankness was not agreeable to the Miss Gunns.

14-15. *The pretty uns . . . fly-catchers*: just as fly-traps (pieces of paper covered with some sticky substance, or with poison soaked in water) keep the flies away from people, so pretty girls keep young men away from the plain women.

16. *I've . . . men*: I do not think highly of men.

17. *and as for . . . stewing*: and as for troubling and worrying myself (with regard to what men think of one).

22-3. *let her leave it . . . themselves*: let her be satisfied to allow those girls who have no money of their own, and so cannot afford to neglect opportunities of getting married, to trouble themselves about men.

24. *Mr. Have-your-own-way . . . husband*: it is better to be independent than to be married.

25. *and . . . obey*: and I would never promise to obey anything except my own inclinations.

26. *when . . . way*: when you have been accustomed to live upon a large scale.

27. *and . . . all that*: and to have the control of large quantities of provisions.

27-8. *to go . . . fireside*: to intrude as a guest into some one else's house, to become an inmate of some other person's home.

28-9. *or to sit down . . . knuckle*: or to live in poverty and alone.

*a scrag*: a bony piece of meat.

*a knuckle*: the knee-joint of a calf or pig.

30-2. *and if you've got a man . . . broke up*: and if there is a man by the fireside, even though he be in his dotage, the business can still be carried on.

35. *this rapid survey of life*: this hurried criticism of life in its more important relations.

38. *to go down*: to descend the stairs.

PAGE 102. 4. *blunt* : frank, plain-spoken.

5. *Law* : an exclamation = lord !

*it popped out* : I said it without thinking.

*it's a mercy* : it's providential.

6. *I said no more* : I said nothing worse.

*I'm a bad . . . folks* : I am not a pleasant companion for those, &c.

9. *daffadil* : a yellow flower.

10. *a mawkin* : a fright, a scarecrow.

14. *in anxious self-vindication* : eager to defend herself.

15-16. *you'd set . . . this* : you were very desirous of having a silk dress of a silver colour.

17. *It 'ud be fine doings* : it would be absurd.

21. *the field's length* : to the end of the field.

22-3. *there was no whipping you* : it was impossible to whip you.

*prim* : demure.

27. *which* : which neck.

28. *to give way . . . right* : to yield as much as I ought.

33. *dyled . . . colouring* : stained with the dye that is used for giving a yellow colour to cheese. Another example of how George Eliot makes her characters choose similes from the walks of life with which they are familiar. (See p. 48, ll. 21-2.)

34. *you'd choose* : (I would prefer that) you would select a dress-material.

35. *There you go again!* here you are coming round to the same point (that sisters should dress alike) as before.

35-6. *You'd come . . . thing* : you would revert to the same topic.

38-9. *and never raise . . . while* : without ever raising your voice to a higher pitch than the noise a kettle of water makes when it is boiling.

40. *mastered* : subjugated, defeated.

PAGE 103. 3. *a fiddlestick's end* : anything at all—said in good-natured derision.

7. *be an old maid* : remain unmarried.

7-8. *because . . . be* : because some people are not so good as they ought to be—an allusion to Godfrey Cass.

8. *I haven't a bit o' patience* : I have no patience.

9-10. *sitting . . . world* : Priscilla means that it is as foolish for Nancy to remain unmarried because Godfrey Cass has turned out bad as it is for a hen to remain

sitting on a bad egg; and that just as there are plenty of good eggs which the hen might sit on, so there are many good men, any one of whom Nancy might marry if she chose.

11-12. *I shall . . . live*: it is fitting and proper that I should remain unmarried.

14-15. *there's . . . ear-droppers in*: now that I have put my ear-rings on I am a perfect scarecrow.

17. *parlour*: sitting-room.

19. *high-featured*: having prominent cheek-bones.

20. *the facsimile*: the exact copy.

21. *the one*: i. e. Priscilla.

22. *the other*: i. e. Nancy.

22-3. *to set off*: to make more effective by contrast.

23-4. *self-forgetful*: unselfish.

25. *the one suspicion*: the notion that she dressed like Nancy, out of a mistaken idea of her own good looks.

27. *disavowed devices*: underhand tricks.

31. *holly, yew, and laurel*: evergreen trees and shrubs.

32. *growths*: foliage.

33. *inward flutter*: her heart beating quickly.

38. *given up*: resigned.

39. *of quite the highest consequence*: of quite the highest rank.

PAGE 104. 1-2. *the extremity . . . experience*: the most magnificent thing she had seen.

5. *exalted her . . . eyes*: heightened the interest of the inner conflict.

6. *deepened the emphasis . . . declared*: caused to declare more emphatically than ever.

10. *motto*: the rule of conduct.

11-14. *should . . . sake*: should ever, by marrying her, have the right to ask her to blot out the image of Godfrey from her heart.

14-15. *her word to herself*: an inward resolution.

15. *under . . . conditions*: in very difficult circumstances.

16. *a becoming blush*: a pretty flush, or deepening of the colour in her face.

16-17. *betrayed . . . her*: indicated the exciting thoughts that occupied her mind.

19. *instinctively . . . actions*: naturally quick and clever in all her movements.

21-2. *to appear agitated*: to show the turmoil of her feelings.



23. *the rector's practice* : the clergyman's custom.

24. *an appropriate compliment* : a suitably flattering remark in praise of her beauty.

25. *lofty* : proud or noble-looking.

27. *propped . . . neckcloth* : supported by a large many-folded cravat.

28-9. *which seemed . . . person* : which appeared to be the most remarkable thing about him.

29-30. *and somehow . . . remarks* : and in some mysterious manner to influence the nature of his speech.

31. *amenities* : pleasant remarks.

31-3. *would . . . abstraction* : would have been so difficult as to be perhaps dangerous (said in jest).

*To abstract* : to draw apart, to consider a thing by itself without reference to its connexions or surroundings.

38. He appeals to Godfrey in mischievous appreciation of the fact that Godfrey was supposed to be in love with Nancy, and was considered a likely husband for her.

40. *very markedly* : in a very noticeable way.

40-105. 1. *these complimentary personalities* : these flattering references to the good looks of young girls.

PAGE 105. 1. *in excellent taste* : very right and proper.

2-4. *reverent love . . . schooling* : respectful affection is naturally polite, although one may have received very little education.

5. *a dull spark* : lacking in spirit.

6. *advanced* : late.

7. *in higher spirits* : more cheerful.

9. *the hereditary duty* : the duty which devolved upon him as head of the family.

*joyial* : jolly.

10. *patronising* : condescending.

10-11. *in active service* : in constant requisition.

13. *the favour* : the honour.

14. *had only . . . welcome* : had only directly noticed.

15. *deepened* : passed on.

16. *rayed out* : extended itself.

20. *heartily* : jovial, cheery.

23. *to supply . . . deficiencies* : to make up for his son's defects.

27. *stiff* : formal.

29. *the mistletoe-bough* : the mistletoe is a plant with

whitish berries found on oak-trees, of which it is a parasite. It is suspended in houses at Christmas-time, and any one may kiss a lady who is found standing under it.

30. *are gone back'ard* : have changed for the worse.

31. *the old king* : King George III.

33. *keep up their quality* : are as beautiful as ever.

*ding me* : a rustic oath, 'confound me.'

34. *a sample to match her* : her equal.

35. *and thought . . . pigtail* : and was very proud of the tail of my powdered wig.

39. *blinking* : having the nervous habit of constantly opening and shutting the eyelids.

39-40. *who . . . with* : who was constantly fingering.

PAGE 106. 3. *soliloquises* : talks to itself—a playful description of the little squeaking sounds made by guinea-pigs.

7-8. *a diplomatic significance* : to mean more than met the ear, to contain a veiled hint.

8-9. *gave . . . back* : sat up a little more straight.

10. *complacent gravity* : calm satisfaction.

✓ 10-11. *That . . . senior* : that sedate and decorous old man, Mr. Lammeter.

11. *was . . . dignity* : had not the slightest intention of demeaning himself.

12. *seeming elated* : evincing any outward satisfaction.

*a match* : a marriage.

16. *spare* : thin.

18. *excess* : dissipation.

✓ 21. *'breed . . . pasture'* : 'race and blood have more to do with the appearance of cattle than food.' A remark which is applicable to men as well as beasts.

26. *without . . . diploma* : without possessing a degree.

27. *flitting* : moving here and there.

32. *canvass for practice* : tout for patients.

33. *starving* : insufficiently feeding.

34. *substance* : means, wealth.

*to keep . . . table* : to indulge to excess in eating and drinking.

35. *Time . . . mind* : from time immemorial.

✓ 36-7. *Kimble . . . name* : the name Kimble was in itself a suitable one for a doctor. Here George Eliot is humorously reflecting village opinion.

38-9. *the actual Kimble* : this particular Dr. Kimble.

40. *incongruous* : unsuitable.

PAGE 107. 2. *Flitton* : a neighbouring village.

4. *authentic* : true, accredited.

8-9. *super-excellent* : very excellent.

9. *the batch* : the number (of pies) baked.

10-11. *I'll answer for it* : I'll guarantee.

16. *tasting* : enjoying.

19. *He tapped his box* : he struck his snuff-box with his finger to loosen the contents (powdered tobacco).

22-3. *choosing . . . lady* : wishing to make it appear that he thought the witticism at his expense had been uttered by Miss Priscilla.

24. *pepper* : Hindustani, 'mirich'.

26-7. *she never has . . . end* : she is not quick-witted : she is never able to retort effectively.

28. *scarify* : to burn.

29. *colic* : acute indigestion.

*greens* : green vegetables, e.g. cabbage.

30. *tit-for-tat* : revenge.

35-6. *by the correlation of forces* : being related to other bodily conditions.

36-37. *went off . . . noises* : was expended in little muscular contractions of the face and inarticulate noises.

PAGE 108. 4. *skipping* : moving lightly.

7. *for'ard* = forward : intrusive, presumptuous.

9. *will be . . . you* : will want to have a fight with you. The time allotted to each period of a boxing-match is known as a 'round'.

10. *bespoke her* : engaged her.

15-16. *under . . . insistance* : at these persistent hints (regarding Miss Nancy).

19. *saw . . . open* : could think of nothing else to do.

20. *with as . . . awkwardness* : with as great an assumption of ease as possible.

36. *a second* : a second wife.

37. *if I . . . first* : if I wept a great deal at your death before marrying again.

PAGE 109. 2. *at cards* : in playing at cards. There is an ellipsis here. (How perfect he would have been) if only he had not been irritable at cards !-

3-4. *While safe . . . way* : while the process of drinking tea was thus being made more interesting by the cracking

of jokes at one another's expense, which having been often repeated were warranted not to give offence, &c.

10. *he's for giving us* : he wishes to give us.

10-11. *as . . . hurry* : that we are not sufficiently eager.

16. *break off* : cease his music, stop playing.

18. *with loud patronage* : in a tone of noisy condescension.

21. *hale* : healthy-looking.

22. *crop* : growth.

23. *indicated spot* : the place pointed out to him.

25-6. *though . . . more* : though not enough to cause him to stop his tune on their account.

32. *the madams* : the married ladies.

34. *solicitously* : carefully, punctiliously.

35-6. *to prelude* : to play a few introductory notes.

36. *fell into* : began to play.

PAGE 110. 3. *I don't . . . of* : which I do not understand, or recognize, at all.

4. *like* : as plainly as.

*I suppose it's the name* : Mr. Lammeter thinks that he recognizes and appreciates the tune 'Over the hills and far away' because its name suggests interesting memories to him.

7-8. *broke . . . Coverley* : began to play with much zest the tune known as 'Sir Roger de Coverley'.

8-9. *a sound of chairs pushed back* : a sound of chairs being pushed back in order that their occupants might rise and take part in the dance.

16-17. *multitudinous wax candles* : many wax candles.

18. *berried holly-boughs* : the branches of dark-green holly contrasting with the bright-red berries which they bore.

21. *seedy* : shabby.

22. *luring . . . company* : attracting those respectable people.

23. *discreet matrons* : circumspect married women.

26-7. *complacently . . . front-folds* : secretly well pleased with their waists and plain skirts.

28. *burly* : big and strong.

*variegated* : of varied colour and design.

*ruddy* : red-faced.

29. *sheepish* : awkward, stupid-looking.

29-30. *nether garments* : breeches.

35. *in that quarter* : among them.

*formed* : arranged themselves.

36. *led off* : began the dance, commenced.

39-40. *the charter . . . ceremony* : the ancient rights and customs of Raveloe seemed to be ratified by the formality.

PAGE 111. 1. *an unbecoming levity* : an act of indecorous frivolity.

4. *these* : i.e. these duties.

4-5. *interchanging . . . frequency* : paying each other visits and making each other presents of fowls fairly often.

5-7. *paying . . . phrases* : flattering each other in correct if well-worn terms.

7. *passing . . . jokes* : repeating old jokes that had stood the test of time.

10. *you . . . cheer* : you appreciated his hospitality.

13. *without a peculiar revelation* : without the special intervention of the Deity.

14-15. *a pale-faced . . . solemnities* : a pallid reminder of one's religious duties.

17-18. *necessarily co-existed with* : were rightly and properly combined with.

19. *to take tithe in kind* : the right to appropriate one-tenth of the produce of the soil.

20-1. *but not . . . irreligion* : not so much as to amount to impiety.

26. *part . . . things* : right and proper.

28. *Mr. Macey's official respect* : the respect which Mr. Macey as parish clerk felt for his official superior, the parson.

28-30. *should restrain . . . fellow-men* : should refrain from criticizing the parson's dancing with the acuteness to be expected from a man of such intelligence regarding the actions of his erring fellow mortals. Notice George Eliot's gentle irony.

32. *pretty spry* : fairly active.

33. *uncommon* : remarkably.

34. *beats them all for shapes* : has a better figure than any of them.

35. *sodger* : soldier.

*cushiony* : like a cushion, stout.

36. *run* : become.

37. *nimble* : active.

39. *down'ard* : below.

39-40. *wi'out damage* : without any harm.

PAGE 112. 3. *Talk o' nimbleness* : speaking about activity.

7. *nor* : than.

8. *the finest . . . is* : she has the best figure of any woman here.

12. *you can't . . . shapes* : one cannot see much of their figures.

13. *Fayder* : father.

13-14. *beating out* : keeping time to.

15. *yead* : head.

16. *shuttlecock* : a cork with feathers in it.

21. *quill* : goose feather, used as a pen.

22. *leading off* : commencing the dance.

*for partners* : as his partner.

23. *a pink-and-white posy* : a bouquet, or nosegay, made of pink and white flowers.

24. *there's . . . pritty* : no one would imagine that any one could be so pretty.

25. *aricr* : after.

26. *and nobody . . . rightfuller* : and nobody with better right.

26-7. *a fine match* : a handsome couple.

27-8. *You can find . . . shapes* : you can find no fault with Master Godfrey's figure.

29. *screwed up his mouth* : pursed his lips together.

30-1. *with a presto movement* : quickly (used generally as a term in music).

33. *Pretty well down'ard* : his legs look fairly well.

35-6. *they're a poor cut . . . for* : they are not well cut, considering that he pays twice the usual price for them.

37. *you . . . folks* : you and I are different.

38. *slightly . . . carping* : rather angry at this captious criticism.

39. *swaller* : swallow.

*do . . . good* : benefit my stomach.

PAGE 113. 1. *faut* : fault.

*the brewing* : the preparation of it.

4. *piert* : cheerful, pert.

7. *slack-baked* : half-baked.

7-8. *I doubt . . . head* : I suspect him to be rather foolish.

8-9. *turned . . . finger* : fooled.

9. *offal* : literally 'refuse', here 'worthless rogue'.

9-10. *as . . . late* : whom no one has seen lately.

10. *and let him kill* : and why did he let him kill, &c.

10-11 *as was . . . country* : which was famous throughout the country-side.

11. *one while* : at one time.

11-12. *he was allays after Miss Nancy* : he was always following Miss Nancy about.

12. *it all went off again* : and then he ceased his attentions.

12-13. *like . . . porridge* : like a fleeting odour of food.

14. *I went a-coorting* : I made love.

15. *mayhap . . . like* : perhaps Miss Nancy was coy—gave him no encouragement, as it were.

17-18. *significantly* : with emphasis.

18-19. *Before I said . . . 'snaff'* : I did not speak before I knew she was willing to encourage me.

22. *a-coming round again* : disposed to look upon him with favour again.

23-4. *down-hearted* : depressed.

24. *he's for taking her* : he is proposing to take her.

26. *sweet-hearting* : making love.

28-9. *in the close press of couples* : among the thick crowd of dancers.

32. *stamp* : tread.

35. *serious concern* : great anxiety.

35-8. *One's . . . things* : however busy one may be in resisting thoughts of love, one can hardly be indifferent to a matter of such fundamental importance as an accident to one's dress.

38-9. *completed . . . dancing* : executed her part in the ordered movements of the dance.

PAGE 114. 3. *meaning* : significance.

*No reason less . . . this* : only an important matter like this.

4. *prevailed on* : induced.

5. *apart* : alone, apart from the others.

6. *oblivious* : forgetful.

7. *country-dance* : derived from 'contre danse'—a dance in which partners face one another.

8. *on the strength of her confusion* : when he noticed her nervousness.

8-9. *and was capable . . . asked* : and was going to lead her away, without consulting her wishes, &c.

18. *artful* : cunning. He knew that an assumption of indifference would pain her if, as he suspected, she loved him.

19. *indifferent* : careless.

20. *an agreeable proposition* : a proposal in accordance with her own declared wishes.

21. *hurt* : pained.

22. *it* : the proposal (to leave her alone in the parlour).

30. *of intended departure* : that he intended to depart.

33. *distractingly prim* : bewitchingly demure.

34. *so many pleasures* : an allusion to the dissipated life she supposed Godfrey to be leading.

35. *can . . . little* : can be a matter of very small importance.

37. *matters more* : is of more importance.

40. *direct* : plain-spoken, plain.

PAGE 115. 1. *instinctive* : natural.

1-2. *repugnance . . . emotion* : dislike of any exhibition of feeling.

2-3. *and only . . . voice* : only speaking in a tone of rather greater determination.

5. *different* : otherwise.

9. *made amends for* : atoned for.

13-14. *had driven . . . himself* : had made him forget himself.

14-15. *blind feeling . . . tongue* : passion made him reckless in his words.

15-16. *the possibility* : that he might wish to make her his wife.

16. *pressure* : force.

24. *pcttishly* : peevishly.

25. *feeling* : sympathy.

27. *to begin with* : in the first place.

*sending out a flash* : emitting a spark of anger.

27-8. *in spite of herself* : in spite of her determination not to show any feeling.

28. *that little flash* : that little exhibition of anger.

30. *exasperatingly* : provokingly.

32. *bustling forward* : hurrying into the room.

33. *Dear heart alive* : an interjection, equal to 'good heavens !'



33-4. *cut off*: checked. Godfrey hoped to provoke a quarrel with Nancy, for if she quarrelled with him it would show she was not indifferent to him.

37. *frank*: plain-spoken.

38. *preoccupied brow*: thoughtful expression.

PAGE 116. 2. *coldness*: appearance of indifference.  
*hem*: border, edge.

## CHAPTER XII.

SUMMARY.—While the dance was going on at Squire Cass's Molly Farren was toiling along the snow-covered lane that led to Raveloe, holding her child in her arms. She intended to disclose herself to Squire Cass as his son's wife in the presence of the assembled guests at the Red House. She had set out at an early hour, but had lingered too long under a shed waiting for the snow to cease to fall. Now it was seven o'clock in the evening. The sky was cloudy, and a freezing wind had sprung up since it had stopped snowing. Molly did not know how near she was to her destination. She felt cold and depressed, and in spite of the mother's love which bade her endure cold and discomfort for the sake of the child she held in her arms, she could not resist the temptation to seek comfort from the phial of opium which she carried in her bosom. Soon the drug began its deadly work. She felt an irresistible desire to lie down and sleep. She staggered on vaguely for a few steps more, and then sinking down against a thorn bush, with the sleeping child still in her arms, she fell into a complete torpor, which soon ended in death. As the mother's arms unbent, and her fingers relaxed, the child awoke, and seeing a mysterious light glancing on the white ground, followed it with childish curiosity to its source in Silas Marner's cottage, where the weaver was standing by his open door, 'arrested by the invisible wand of catalepsy,' and 'powerless to resist either the good or evil that might enter there'. He had been looking out into the night with a longing and even a vague hope, although he could not have put it to words, that his gold might be restored. While he was standing unconscious by the open door the little child toddled in, led by the light from the fire which had attracted its

attention in the snow, and fell asleep on the hearth. When Silas Marner returned to consciousness he closed his door, and was astonished on turning to the hearth to see something bright and yellow on the floor in front of the almost extinguished fire. At first he thought it was his gold come back to him, but bending closer he soon recognized the golden curls of the sleeping child. When the child awoke Silas fed it, and perceiving that its boots were wet, reflected that it must have been walking in the snow. Opening the door he followed the little one's footsteps in the snow, until they led him to the dead form of the mother lying against the thorn bush.

7-8. *was taking . . . Nancy*: was becoming oblivious to everything else in the sweet company of Nancy.

8-11. *willingly . . . sunshine*: content to forget the secret marriage which at other times troubled and irritated him to such an extent as to make him angry even at the sunlight.

12. *uncertain*: unsteady.

15. *which . . . heart*: which she had cherished.

16. *in . . . passion*: in a moment of anger.

20-21. *hiding . . . heart*: saying nothing about her to others, and forgetting her as much as possible himself.

21. *mar*: spoil.

22. *dingy*: soiled.

25-7. *It is seldom . . . miserable*: the wretched generally blame those who are more fortunate than themselves for their misery.

29. *the demon*: the diabolical drug.

31. *to give . . . child*: to sacrifice her child to it (i.e. to opium).

32-3. *in the moments . . . consciousness*: in the lucid intervals when she was not under the influence of opium and awoke to a full sense of all her misery.

PAGE 117. 1. *had her rights*: were fairly treated.

*well off*: wealthy.

3. *aggravated her vindictiveness*: increased her malignity.

3-6. *Just . . . earth*: it is not too easy to judge oneself rightly, and to admit and regret one's fault, even when one is under the highest moral and religious influences.

6-10. *how should . . . jokes*: how could such pure thoughts enter Molly's corrupted mind, which could remember nothing better than that which constitutes

a barmaid's happiness, pretty dresses and the jests and flattering remarks of 'gentlemen'?

13. *shed*: shelter by the roadside.

15. *belated*: overtaken by darkness.

15-16. *in the . . . lanes*: in the rutty snow-covered country roads.

16-17. *even . . . failing*: not even the stimulus of revenge could save her from depression.

20. *monotonous*: tedious, dreary.

22. *the familiar . . . bosom*: the devilish opium which she kept concealed in the bosom of her dress.

23-4. *the black remnant*: the black remains of the drug.

24-6. *In that moment . . . oblivion*: her maternal feelings prompted her to keep awake in spite of pain and depression, rather than to seek unconsciousness.

31. *phial*: small bottle.

31-4. *And she . . . ceased*: and she walked on under the clouds which parted for a moment to show the light of a star, which was quickly covered by other clouds the cold wind was driving across the sky.

35. *drowsily*: sleepily.

35-6. *and clutched . . . bosom*: and held ever more mechanically.

37. *the demon . . . will*: the drug was producing its evil effects.

38. *and . . . helpers*: assisted by cold and weariness.

38-40. *Soon . . . futurity*: soon she was conscious of nothing but an overwhelming urgent desire that made her oblivious to all other considerations.

PAGE 118. 2. *checked . . . hedgerow*: she had arrived at the open space near the stone-pits and the cottage of Silas Marner.

*vaguely*: uncertainly.

4. *wide whiteness*: the wide expanse of snow.

5. *a straggling furze bush*: a ragged thorn bush.

*easy*: because in her semi-unconscious state she could not feel the prick of the thorns.

9. *did not . . . clutch*: still clung automatically to the child.

12. *torpor*: unconsciousness.

13. *lost their tension*: released their hold.

16. *peevish*: irritable.

17. *pillowing*: sheltering.

18. *the pillow*: the protecting arm and bosom of the mother.

21. *glancing*: gleaming.

22. *the ready transition*: the quick change of attention.

23. *the bright living thing*: the bright light which, to its inexperienced senses, seemed to be alive.

26. *on all-fours*: on its hands and knees.

30. *a bright place*: the lighted interior of Silas Marner's cottage.

31. *toddled*: tottered.

31-2. *the old . . . behind it*: dragging behind it the dirty old shawl.

33-4. *and the queer . . . back*: and with the quaint little bonnet hanging down its back.

37. *the bricks*: the bricks which composed the floor in front of the fireplace.

39. *squatted*: sat down.

*the sack*: Hindustani, 'bōra'.

40. *the blaze*: the fire.

PAGE 119. 1. *gurgling*: bubbling, chuckling.

1-2. *inarticulate communications*: indistinct sounds, meaningless noises.

3. *gosling*: young goose.

4. *lulling*: soothing.

5. *golden*: yellow-haired.

6. *veiled*: covered.

*lids*: eyelids.

8. *visitor*: the little child.

14. *on the road*: on the way, about to arrive.

15. *straining*: eagerly gazing.

17. *fell . . . act*: repeated this action (of standing at the open door).

18. *assigned . . . purpose*: given no clear reason.

19-20. *who have . . . object*: who have been stunned by the loss of what they most loved and cherished.

22. *narrow prospect*: confined space.

24. *yearning and unrest*: longing and dissatisfaction.

27. *the old year . . . rung in*: the bells ringing at midnight on the last day of the year to bid farewell to the old year and welcome to the new.

30. *jesting . . . miser*: joking at the expense of a miser, whose peculiarities were considered evidence of a somewhat disordered mind.

32-3. *the on-coming of twilight* : the approach of sunset.

34. *all distance veiled* : every prospect shut out, the view obscured.

36. *parting* : breaking.

39. *he caught . . . it* : he saw nothing of it.

40. *trackless* : untrodden.

*to narrow* : to confine within narrower limits, to deepen.

PAGE 120. 1-2. *and touched . . . despair* : and froze his heart with the conviction that his longing was in vain.

4. *his loss* : the loss of his money.

5. *the invisible . . . catalepsy* : by a sudden fit or seizure as if he had come under the influence of an invisible spell or charm.

6. *graven* : carved.

9. *sensibility* : consciousness.

9-10. *he continued . . . arrested* : his thoughts returned to the point where they had been interrupted.

11. *chasm in his consciousness* : the suspension of his consciousness.

12. *any intermediate change* : anything that had happened in the interval.

16-17. *a red . . . glimmer* : a dim glow.

19. *blurred vision* : dim sight.

28. *resisting outline* : firm edge.

*encountered* : met with, touched.

36-7. *that darted . . . wonderment* : emerged from the confusion into which his thoughts were thrown.

40. *disperse the vision* : remove the appearance.

PAGE 121. 1. *shabby* : dingy.

7. *thrusting it away* : removing it from his consciousness.

8. *there was a vision of* : he recalled to memory.

9-10. *and within . . . another* : and that memory recalled to his mind the thoughts, &c.

13. *a dreamy feeling* : an indistinct consciousness.

15. *it stirred fibres* : it awakened emotions.

16. *quiverings* : feelings.

16-18. *old impressions . . . life*. Former feelings of reverent fear at the idea present to his mind that his life was being watched over by an unseen Deity.

18-19. *for his imagination . . . presence* : for he had not

yet been able to think of any rational explanation of the child's appearance, which seemed to him to partake of the mysterious or supernatural.

27. *it*: the child.

27-8. *almost . . . tenderness*: and almost unknown to himself tried to quiet it with soothing words.

28-9. *he bethought himself*: he remembered.

30. *would do . . . child*: would suffice to feed the child.

31. *warmed up*: heated once more.

34. *store*: supply.

PAGE 122. 1. *posture*: position.

3. *a crying face*: a pitiful expression, as if about to weep.

4-5. *before it occurred . . . mind*: before Silas, being unmarried, and therefore slow to perceive the requirements of little children, realized, &c.

6. *the grievance*: the cause of her trouble.

6-7. *he . . . off*: he took off the boots.

8. *occupied . . . toes*: trying to solve the elementary puzzle of the meaning of its own little feet.

9. *chuckling*: laughter.

11-14. *this roused . . . house*: this made him wonder how the child could have entered his house—a question with which up to this time he had not concerned himself.

14. *Under . . . idea*: under the influence of this thought.

15. *without . . . conjectures*: without tarrying to make any guesses (as to how she could have entered).

20. *virgin*: freshly fallen, untrodden.

21. *furze*: an evergreen thorn-bush with bright yellow flowers.

27. *the shaken snow*: the snow which had fallen, or been shaken from the bush when Molly Farren sank down against it.

### CHAPTER XIII.

SUMMARY.—While the dance was going on at the Red House, and the merriment was at its height, Godfrey Cass, who was stealing long glances at Nancy Lammeter, happened to raise his eyes, and to his astonishment perceived Silas Marner standing in the room with his child in his arms. Silas, who was out of breath with running, gasped out that he had come for the doctor:

that he had found a woman dead in the snow, not far from his door. Dr. Kimble was summoned from the card-room, while the ladies gathered questioningly round the pretty child, which Silas Marner, to his own and every one else's astonishment, refused to part with. Godfrey went to summon Dolly Winthrop, whose services were always available on such occasions, and in her company hurried to the stone-pits, whither he had been preceded by Dr. Kimble, who was now in Silas Marner's house, where the woman was lying. Godfrey waited outside the door, a prey to conflicting emotions, but when the doctor came out and pronounced the woman dead, he could not repress a great throb of joy. He went into the cottage to take a last look at her, who had been his wife, and then turned to the child, which was seated on Marner's knee by the fireside, and gazed at its father with wide-open eyes, in which there was no sign of recognition: for Godfrey had seen little of it, and it was too young to remember him or make any overt claim to his protection. Godfrey was glad of this, and yet he experienced a feeling of jealous regret when he saw his child fondled in Silas Marner's arms, and 'pulling his withered cheek with loving disfiguration'.

Marner announced his intention of keeping the child, and Godfrey, thrusting a piece of gold into his hand, hurried out of the cottage to overtake Dr. Kimble. He excused his leaving the ball and going out into the snow in his dancing-pumps with an assumption of easy indifference, stating that he was tired of 'jigging and gallanting', and glad of the opportunity of escaping a dance with Miss Gunn. On arrival at the Red House he changed his shoes and reappeared in the ball-room, glad, in spite of everything, that he could now claim Nancy as his own, and that he need never confess his secret marriage with Molly Farren. As for the child, he would do everything for it but acknowledge it.

29-30. *the entertainment . . . jollity*: things had reached a pass when the guests had lost their shyness and self-consciousness, and were taking part without reserve in the amusements of the evening.

32. *pretailed on*: persuaded.

*hornpipe*: a lively dance.

33. *snuff*: powdered tobacco.

35. *whist-table*: card-table.

a choice exasperating : a preference which was very annoying.

36. *volatile* : merry and frivolous.

PAGE 123. 1. *intense* : deeply interested.

*bitter* : irritable.

✓ 2. *shuffled . . . dealt* : rearranged the cards before his opponent dealt them out to the players.

*glare* : a fierce look.

✓ 3. *turned up a mean trump-card* : at whist the last card dealt by the dealer is turned up, or exposed, and indicates the winning suit, which is called 'trumps'.

✓ 4-6. *as if . . . profligacy* : as if a player having such bad luck as to expose a low trump-card would be justified in plunging into reckless dissipation. Said in playful irony at the exaggerated interest Uncle Kimble took in cards.

10. *regions* : parts, quarters.

16. *figuring* : posturing.

17. *lithe* : active, agile.

19. *this* : i.e. to be like himself in his young days.

20. *highest . . . merit* : the best proof of excellence in a young man.

21. *the performer* : Bob Cass.

25-9. *He stood aloof . . . explicit* : he stood apart from Nancy because he did not wish to afford his father an opportunity of making coarse jests about his supposed desire to marry the beautiful girl—jest which would become less and less veiled as the evening advanced.

34. *they encountered* : they (his eyes) met—he saw, &c.

✓ 36. *an apparition from the dead* : a ghost, a spirit.

36-9. *It was . . . admirers* : just as in the gloomy side-streets things occur which would never be suspected by those who admire the beautiful decorated parts of the houses in a main street, so what Godfrey Cass now saw was an apparition from that part of his life which he had kept hidden, unknown to his friends and admirers.

40. *That was his . . . doubt* : this he perceived at once beyond the possibility of doubt.

PAGE 124. 6. *strange advent* : remarkable occurrence.

23. *throb* : beating or palpitation of the heart.

25-7. *an ugly inmate . . . disposition* : an evil thought to have entered Godfrey's benevolent heart.

✓ 27-9. *no disposition . . . duplicity* : no amount of good



nature will save from evil thoughts a man whose happiness depends on dishonesty.

40. *the pretty child*: i.e. Godfrey's child which Silas was carrying in his arms.

PAGE 125. 2. *now . . . now*: sometimes . . . sometime.

3. *placably*: calmly, peacefully.

4. *coaxing*: soothing.

5. *bury*: hide.

10. *wrung from himself*: compelled himself to make. Godfrey repudiates his child. For his punishment see pp. 182-3 in this book.

11. *am I certain?*: i.e. am I sure that the child is mine?

12. *in anticipation . . . conscience*: as if to stifle his conscience before it began to rebuke him for the falsehood.

15. *dingy*: dirty.

16. *bodice*: upper part of dress down to the waist.

23-4. *was almost like a revelation to himself*: his instinctive desire to keep the child almost astonished himself.

24-5. *no distinct . . . child*: no clear purpose with regard to the child.

26. *Did . . . like?*: did you ever hear such a thing?

29-30. *in some . . . interruption*: somewhat annoyed at being disturbed in his game at cards.

30-2. *drilled . . . sober*: disciplined by the long practice of his calling into responding at once to calls for aid to the sick or dying, even when such calls came at inconvenient times, and when he was almost intoxicated.

33. *a nasty business*: an unpleasant task.

35. *'prentice*: apprentice, assistant.

PAGE 126. 8. *the company was*: the guests were assembled.

11-12. *who . . . confidence*: in whom she seemed to repose implicit trust.

13. *the boots*: the boots he had gone to fetch for Dr. Kimble.

13-14. *and felt . . . him*: and felt the cry of his child as if some one were tugging at his heart-strings.

15. *eager for some movement*: anxious to do something to distract his thoughts.

17. *pooh*: 'nonsense'.

23. *just reflection enough*: sufficient power of thought left.

26. *without heeding his thin shoes*: i.e. without changing his thin shoes for thick ones.

27. *he was on his rapid way* : he was walking rapidly.

28. *Dolly* : i.e. Mrs. Winthrop.

29. *entirely in her place* : quite suitably employed.

30. *concerned* : troubled.

31. *a young gentleman* : Godfrey.

31-2. *under a like impulse* : under the influence of a similar desire, i.e. to perform a kindly duty.

33. *You'd . . . back* : it would be much better for you to go back.

34. *You've no call* : there is no reason for you.

37. *I doubt* : I suspect.

*anyway* : at all.

38. *'ud happen* : would perhaps.

PAGE 127. 1. *now I'm once out* : since I have come out.

7. *painfully preoccupied* : absorbed in painful thoughts.

7-8. *to feel a twinge of self-reproach* : to feel any pangs of conscience.

9-10. *he was . . . snow* : he was walking in the snow up to his ankles.

10-11. *trembling suspense* : terrible uncertainty.

12. *the effect . . . lot* : about what his fate would be in either event—in case Molly were living, or in case she were dead.

14. *desire* : for her death.

*dread* : that she might be alive.

15-16. *there was the sense . . . alternatives* : he felt that in any case his duty was clear.

20. *he had only conscience, &c.* : his conscience was not strong enough to make him do his duty (i.e. to own his wife and child and give up all hope of marrying Nancy). It was only strong enough to make him miserable under the sense that he had neglected his duty.

22-5. *And at this moment . . . bondage* : and now he eagerly embraced the unexpected hope of freedom from the chain which had so long oppressed him, regardless of duty or conscience.

26-7. *said the voice . . . within him* : was the thought that overcame every other in his brain.

30. *across that vision* : opposed to that thought.

31. *'it's all up with me'* : I'm ruined.

PAGE 128. 5. *emaciated* : thin and wasted.

6. *vagrant* : wanderer, tramp, vagabond.

8. *workhouse* : house for paupers.

17. *worn* : faded.

*was present to him* : was remembered by him.

20. *lulling* : soothing.

21-8. *only soothed . . . pathway* : under the influence of food and warmth she remained silent with wide-open eyes. Into the hearts of grown-up people, conscious of perturbed and agitated minds, such wide-eyed calm strikes something akin to fear and veneration, such as they experience before any beautiful or grand phenomenon, where the working of Nature is seen but not heard, as in the steady light of a star, or a full-blown wild rose, or trees silently bending over a pathway.

28-38. Although the child experienced no discomfort in Godfrey's presence, it did not recognize him as its father. It could not assert its right to a father's love by any sound or sign ; and when the child turned its gaze away from Godfrey, and looked at the odd countenance of the weaver bending over it, while it pulled the faded cheek with loving grasp, Godfrey's pleasure in having escaped being made known as the little one's father was mingled with jealous regret that his paternal longing for the child touched no answering chord in that little heart.

39. *parish* : the workhouse, where provision is made for paupers and pauper children.

40. *speaking . . . could* : with an assumption of carelessness.

PAGE 129. 7. *I reckon* : I suppose.

10. *mazed* : perplexed, confused.

17. *the old fellow* : Silas Marner.

19. *a trifle* : a small sum.

*the parish* : the parish authorities ; the council elected by the ratepayers of the district.

21-2. Said by Dr. Kimble, who is childless and would have liked to adopt a child.

27. *beaux* : fashionable young men.

28. *such freaks* : such odd behaviour.

30. *pumps* : dancing-shoes.

32. *tired to death* : completely tired.

*jigging* : dancing.

*gallanting* : paying compliments to ladies.

*bother* : ado, excitement.

33. *I'd got to dance* : I was engaged, or under a promise to dance.

34. *glad . . . subterfuge* : glad of the opportunity of giving a false explanation of his having left the ball-room and accompanied Dr. Kimble to see the dead body.

35-40. *The prevarication . . . a lie* : when once a man acts in such a way as to give a false impression, no matter how scrupulously honest he may have been before, evasions and equivocations which formerly made him uneasy (as a defect in a painting troubles the painter, although no one else has noticed it) now become a matter of complete indifference.

PAGE 130. 1-2. *with dry feet* : having changed his shoes.

5. *tenderest* : most affectionate.

7-8. *that he . . . see him* : that he would model his character in accordance with her wishes.

14. *won* : bribed.

15-18. *And when . . . appeared* : when something that a man fears very much does not happen, he is apt to consider that his behaviour has not been so silly and wicked after all.

18-19. *When . . . well* : when we fare well.

20. *unmeritorious* : undeserving.

*just* : right and proper that, &c.

23. *the past* : his former foolish conduct and unfortunate marriage.

24. *confidence* : certainty, assurance.

27. *own it* : recognize it publicly as his own.

31. Godfrey did not want to own the child, for then he would have to acknowledge his marriage with Molly Farren, and he feared that in that case Nancy Lammeter would not marry him.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

SUMMARY.—Molly Farren was buried at the expense of the parish, and no one appeared to concern themselves about her fate, yet her death was not without its effect on the lives of several of the characters in this story.

Every one was astonished at the resolution of the 'half-crazy miser', Silas Marner, to keep the little child, and the mothers of the village were not slow to give him advice as to the best way to bring her up. Dolly Winthrop was especially helpful, and on her advice Eppie was baptized.

Eppie had come to Silas Marner to take the place of his lost money. Only her influence, unlike that of his gold, led him to go out among his neighbours, and to renew that intercourse with his fellow men which had for so long been interrupted. His love and care for her led him to forget his own troubles, and even her little mischievous pranks provided him with new cares and anxieties, which were wholesome, because they were not for himself, but for her.

After the failure of his first experiment he could never bring himself to punish her again.

He used to take her with him when he visited the neighbouring farms to buy yarn or sell cloth, and her sunny presence helped to endear him to the farmers and their families. For he thought only of her, and asked industriously for all knowledge that would satisfy her growing needs.

So he was led from the city of destruction by the hand of a little child.

33. *a pauper's burial*: a funeral at the expense of the parish.

35. *the dark-haired woman*: Molly Farren.

PAGE 131. 1. *express note*: direct notice.

3. *general lot*: ordinary mankind.

4. *summer-shed leaf*: the leaf that falls from the tree in summer.

4-5. *was charged . . . to*: was fated to have a great influence upon.

5. *certain . . . of*: e.g. Silas Marner, Godfrey Cass, Nancy Lammeter.

8-9. *was matter . . . than*: was repeated almost as often and with as much astonishment in the village as, &c.

11. *misfortune*: the theft of his money.

*that merging . . . crazy*: that change of feeling, which ceasing to regard him with distrust and hatred, made him an object of pity, mingled with contempt for his solitary, half-witted condition.

14. *Notable mothers*: mothers of good repute.

15. *'whole and sweet'*: healthy and clean.

18. *propensities*: tendencies, inclinations.

18-19. *just . . . legs*: just able to stand and walk.

19. *conjecturing*: wondering.

20-21. *would manage . . . hands* : would contrive to support and look after a child two years of age.

21. *suggestions* : advice.

22. *the notable* : i. e. the good mothers.

26. *whose . . . were* : whose friendly assistance was.

28. *of bustling instruction* : of officious direction.

32. *call* : need.

33. *no more nor* : any more than.

34. *petticoats* : under-garments.

*ill* : useless.

37. *her bundle* : her parcel of clothes.

39-40. *patched and darned* : mended.

*fresh-sprung herbs* : plants newly grown, just appearing above the ground.

PAGE 132. 1-2. *a great ceremony . . . water* : a good bath.

8. *uneasiness* : discomfort.

9. *expecting . . . follow* : anticipating that any notice would be taken of it.

14. *there's Them . . . of it* : there is One who took care of it.

17. *robin* : a well-known bird with a red breast.

24. *trances* : fits of unconsciousness.

25-31. Dolly's simple way of saying that the great things in life are independent of human agency. Nature and Destiny accomplish their purposes regardless of the ineffectual strivings of men.

28-29. *We may . . . scrat and fend* : we may seek to provide food for and to maintain ourselves and those dependent on us.

30. *wi' no striving o' our'n* : independently of our action.

34. *moithered* : troubled, worried.

35. *welcome* : gladly.

36. *a bit o' time to spare* : a little time at my disposal, a little leisure.

37. *betimes* : early.

37-8. *the clock seems . . . ten* : time seems to drag about ten o'clock.

38-9. *to go about the victual* : to prepare the food.

PAGE 133. 8. *fending for* : providing for, looking after.

10. *Eh, to be sure* : yes, indeed.

11. *handy* : clever (in managing).

12. *contrairy* : obstinate.

*mostly* : as a rule.

13. *the drink's out of 'em* : when they are not under the influence of intoxicating liquor.

*unsensible* : lacking in good sense or intelligence.

14. *they're bad for leeching and bandaging* : they are troublesome when one has to bind up a wound or apply leeches to relieve congested blood-vessels; i. e. they make bad patients.

14-15. *so fiery and unpatient* : so irritable and impatient.

18. *docilely* : obediently.

19. *they might . . . mysteries* : he might see how the baby was dressed—an art at present unknown and mysterious to him.

21. *purring* : affectionate.

23. *tact* : power of saying the right thing at the right time.

25. *I'll be bound* : I am certain.

26-7. *as you've done for her* : that you have looked after her.

29-30. *at something . . . life* : at a completely new experience.

35. *gymnastics* : movements.

40. *as . . . grate* : that you have a raised fireplace instead of a framework of iron bars to hold the coals while burning.

PAGE 134. 2-3. *as is fit . . . off* : with which she could cut her fingers.

3. *but right* : only right.

8. *mayhap* : perhaps.

11. *if you was . . . up* : if you were to take them and fasten them to anything with a rope or string.

12-13. *as if you . . . pigs* : as if you were putting rings in the snouts of pigs to prevent them uprooting things.

19. *to scour* : to clear the floor by rubbing it.

*the knitting* : making socks, vests, &c., by interweaving woollen thread with long needles, called 'knitting-needles'.

20. I can teach them to this little one.

25. *according* : as a father should.

26-7. *a point . . . touch upon* : a matter which she had made up her mind beforehand to speak about.

28. *like christened folk's children*: as the children of baptized children should be brought up.

29. *catechize*: catechism, a summary of the principles of the Christian religion in the form of questions and answers.

*as*: which.

30. *say off*: repeat.

33. *do the right thing by*: act rightly towards.

✓ 35-7. *His mind . . . her*: he was so busy trying to get at Dolly's meaning and purpose that he did not think of answering her.

39. *christened*: baptized, admitted into the Christian Church by the ceremony of baptism; immersion in or sprinkling with water.

39-40. *and it's . . . spoke to*: it is only right that you should speak to the clergyman about it.

40-135. 1. *if you . . . unwilling*: if you had no objection.

✓ PAGE 135. 2. *ever went anyways wrong*: over came to grief in any way.

3. *your part by it*: your duty to it.

4. *'noculation*: communicating the disease (of small-pox) in a mild form by inserting matter in the skin, so as to prevent a person from getting the disease in a severe form.

5. It would disturb your rest as long as you lived.

6. *as it 'ud . . . lying down*: that one's rest would be undisturbed.

✓ 8-9. *as come . . . asking*: who are born without being consulted in any way.

12. *much concerned*: very anxious.

17. *grown-up*: adult. Infant baptism is practised in most Christian churches, but adult baptism is the custom among the 'Baptists' and some other Dissenting bodies.

19. *good*: kind to her. How often we quarrel about words and fail to understand one another through using different names for the same thing!

27. *used to*: I used to know a great deal, &c.

28. *a good way off*: a long distance from here.

32. *I'll act according*: I'll carry out.

35. *fix*: decide.

40. *a christened name*: a Christian name, such a name as should be given in baptism.



that united in bonds of love the members of the neighbouring families.

21. *deafened . . . things* : more and more indifferent to everything.

22. *the monotony* : the monotonous work.

22-3. *the repetition . . . web* : the increase in the tale of cloth of the same pattern and design.

24. *its pauses* : interruptions in his weaving.

24-5. *reawakening . . . life* : arousing his interest in external objects once more by her eager vitality.

27. *warming . . . joy* : exciting happiness in his heart.

29. *buttercups* : little yellow flowers.

32. *strolling* : walking leisurely.

36. *things* : insects.

37. *petals* : flower-leaves.

38. *Dad-dad* : a childish name for 'father'.

PAGE 138. 1. *hushed stillness* : silent attention.

3. *gurgling triumph* : bubbling exultation.

6. *unchanged outline* : familiar shape.

7. *palm* : hand.

7-8. *there was a sense . . . timidly* : old memories thronged into his mind, but he tried to divert his attention from them.

8-9. *taking refuge . . . spirit* : seeking to occupy his thoughts in Eppie's childish interests, which contained nothing to trouble his broken spirit.

10. *was growing into* : awoke to.

11-14. *as her life unfolded . . . consciousness* : as she developed, his spirit which had long been restricted and dull and loveless slowly awoke and expanded and became responsive.

15. *gather force* : grow stronger.

16. *every new year* : each succeeding year.

16-17. *the tones . . . answers* : the inarticulate sounds of the child voice which always awakened a loving response in Silas Marner's heart, now framed themselves in distinct words, and required answers in words too.

20. *account for* : explain.

20-5. *Also, by the time . . . penetration* : when Eppie was three years old she became very mischievous and clever in giving trouble, so that Silas not only had to be patient, but watchful and sagacious.

26. *the incompatible demands of love* : the inconsistent

requirements of his love for the child, which on the one hand demanded that he should punish her when she was naughty, and on the other made him hesitate to hurt her, or to do anything which might diminish her affection for him.

28-30. *and that, as for rearing . . . done*: and that it was impossible to bring up a child without making it smart sometimes in parts of its body where no injury could be inflicted by corporal punishment.

32. *meditatively*: reflectively.

34. *silly wi*: foolishly indulgent to.

37. *colly him*: cover him with coal dust.

38-9. *it was as good . . . was*: to have to be washed and dressed again was as great a punishment to him as to be beaten with a rod.

'PAGE 139. 1. *ayther*: either.

2. *she'll . . . masterful*: she will become so self-willed.

*there'll be no holding her*: it will be impossible to control her.

4. *force of mind*: resolution.

5. *only . . . him*: the only two modes of punishment available.

7. *contention*: strife.

8-11. *Let even . . . master?*: just as a tender-hearted giant, if tied by a string to a little delicate creature, would be under its control because he would be equally afraid of hurting it by pulling the string and of losing it through breaking the string, so Silas was controlled by Eppie, being equally afraid of hurting her and of losing her affection.

13-14. *It was clear . . . mischief*: it was evident that Eppie, with her childish, staggering steps, would give father Silas much trouble any day when she had an opportunity to be naughty.

19. *truckle-bed*: a low bed on wheels.

21. *engrossed*: absorbed.

22. *'setting up'*: preparing.

23. *in requisition*: required.

25. *click*: sound.

29. e. g. that while the scissors 'clicked' they cut the cloth.

31. *a ledge*: a little projecting shelf.

33. *stole*: moved, crept.

37. *jagged*: uneven.

PAGE 140. 1. *the terrible . . . him* : he realized the terrible fact.

5. *unenclosed* : open.

6. *cavities* : hollows.

7. *questioning dread* : with fearful inquiry.

8-9. *The cold . . . brow* : a cold perspiration broke out on his forehead.

10. *stile* : steps.

11. *habitually* : generally.

12-13. *there was . . . her* : it was impossible to see her.

15. *misdeemeanour* : offence (of treading on Mr. Osgood's crops).

16. *peering* : looking closely.

17. *perturbed vision* : troubled sight.

17-18. *to see* : to imagine he saw.

18. *sorrel* : a field-plant with reddish-brown flowers.

21. *dying* : failing, decreasing.

22-3. *which . . . shallowness* : which had receded from its banks because of the summer heat.

23. *margin* : edge.

24. *adhesive* : sticky.

26. *bucket* : pail, vessel for holding water.

31. *aberration* : wandering from the path of rectitude.

32. *demand . . . treatment* : required severe punishment.

33. *convulsive* : violent.

*treasure* : his cherished darling.

PAGE 141. 1. *closet* : cupboard.

8. *shock enough* : a sufficiently unpleasant punishment.

10. *to shake herself on his knee* : to move quickly up and down on his knee.

11. *proposition . . . novelty* : as if the threat of putting her in the coal-hole afforded a prospect of a pleasing new experience.

11-12. *he . . . extremities* : (that) he must use strong measures.

14. *he was . . . measure* : he was adopting a very severe mode of punishment.

15. '*Opy*' : open.

19. *stand still* : cease.

28. *without fastening* : without being tied up.

32. *de coal-hole* : the coal-hole.

34. *efficacy* : value, usefulness.

35. *take . . . fun* : consider it all as play.

*observed* : remarked.

36-7. *makes . . . trouble* : causes me a little trouble.

37-8. *she's got . . . out of* : when she grows older she will give up all her tricks.

PAGE 142. 1. *to frighten . . . things* : to prevent her from touching things through fear of punishment.

3. *pups* : young dogs.

*a-rearing* : keeping, bringing up.

4. *worry and gnaw* : shake and bite things.

4-6. *if it was . . . drag it* : even if one's best cap, worn on Sundays, were hanging so as to be within reach of their teeth they would pull it about.

7. *the pushing . . . on* : cutting their teeth causes them to do it.

9. *reared* : brought up, educated.

9-10. *the burden . . . Silas* : Silas, who was like a father to her, enduring in her stead all the trouble caused by her acts of mischief.

11-12. *The stone . . . patience* : she was as comfortable in the stone cottage where her pranks were suffered with such forbearance as a bird in its downy nest.

21. *out-lying homesteads* : neighbouring farms.

22-30. *Hitherto . . . woven* : so far he had been regarded as a kindly dwarf or goblin, an odd and inexplicable being, an object of mingled astonishment and loathing, with whom one did not linger longer than necessary, but who must be treated with consideration, and receive a present of meat or vegetables now and then, since without his aid the cloth could not be woven.

31. *open* : frank.

33. *he must sit down* : he was made to sit down.

36. *she takes . . . easy* : she gets the measles soon and has only a mild attack.

*measles* : a contagious fever with red spots on the face and body.

38. *to take up with* : to look after.

*I reckon* : I suppose.

39. *handier* : more skilful with your hands.

40. *you're . . . woman* : you are almost as clever with your fingers as a woman.

PAGE 143. 2-3. *shook their heads* : were rather pessimistic.

8. *to do for him* : to look after him.

14-16. *till attraction . . . kiss* : till they felt sufficiently drawn to her to offer to kiss her.

19. *link* : unite.

21. *blent . . . one* : united them as one.

23. *lady-birds* : small red-winged beetles with dark spots on their wings.

*pebbles* : little round stones.

24-5. *in relation to* : as it affected.

26. *a good* : worth having.

30. *communion* : connexion.

31. *to which . . . soil* : which he would acclimatize.

33. *his nursling* : the young plant.

35. *the searching roots* : the roots that seek for moisture.

35-6. *invading* : impending.

36. *The disposition to hoard* : the desire to heap up wealth.

37. *utterly crushed* : completely destroyed.

39. *irrelevant* : meaningless.

PAGE 144. 1. *bereavement* : loss.

2. *thrill of satisfaction* : feeling of pleasure.

4-6. *which gave a growing purpose to the earnings . . . money* : which gave him an object on which to spend his money, so that he no longer loved money for its own sake, but looked upon it as a means of benefit for her to whose future he looked forward with ever-increasing confidence and satisfaction.

7-14. See Gen. xix. 1-28. When the city of Sodom was about to be destroyed for its wickedness, God sent two angels to rescue Lot and his wife and daughters from the impending destruction. Such angels do not appear now. Yet good influences are still at work among us, to lead us from evil to good, so that we no longer regard evil ways; and the means of our salvation may be a little child.

## CHAPTER XV.

PAGE 144. 17. *the prosperous growth* : the successful up-bringing.

18-22. *He dared . . . goodwill* : he gave the weaver such help as he could without exciting suspicion, knowing that his good offices would be attributed to his kindly nature prompting him, when by chance he met the weaver, to make him a small gift, which would not excite much

remark, for Silas Marner was now regarded with general favour.

21. *towards . . . welfare* : to benefit.

27. *her birthright* : what was due to her as his daughter.

29. *stations* : rank, position.

33-4. *I wonder . . . hard* : i. e. I do not think it pricked very hard.

34. *when . . . chase* : when he began to pursue the object of his desire.

35. *and only pierced to the quick* : and only penetrated deeply into the finger so as to cause much pain.

PAGE 145. 1-2. *when . . . regret* : when the desired object had long been in his possession and when it was no longer possible to repair the mischief done, or to atone for the past.

8. *specific* : particular.

*delicate* : painful.

10. *the shadow . . . path* : Godfrey was no longer troubled by fear of what Dunsey might say or do.

13. *had . . . turn* : had turned over a new leaf, had made a change for the better in his mode of life.

13-14. *and it . . . things* : and it was fairly evident that he would marry Nancy.

16. *jocosely* : jestingly.

17. *the day* : the wedding-day.

17-18. *the pleasant consciousness* : the pleased self-consciousness.

20. *vision* : the prospect.

21. *a promised . . . sight* : to afford a vista of happiness which was certain to come without any effort on his part.

22-3. *centred . . . hearth* : fixed in his own home.

25. *not on the hearth* : not by his fireside—for whom he would make no provision in his home.

27. *That was a father's duty* : notice the irony of this. He tried to convince himself that he would do his duty by his child, although he knew, as the reader knows, that his duty and his inclination were incompatible. He wanted to marry Nancy Lammeter without telling her of his former marriage, without telling her that Eppie was his child.

## PART II.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**SUMMARY.**—Sixteen years after Silas Marner had found Eppie on his hearth the people are leaving the old Raveloe church after service, and among them we notice Godfrey Cass, Nancy and her sister Priscilla, and their father, old Mr. Lammieter.

Among the humbler members of the congregation we notice Silas Marner, less short-sighted than before, but in every other respect much enfeebled by the lapse of sixteen years. By his side walks Eppie, grown into a beautiful girl of eighteen, while not far behind is Aaron, now a handsome young man, waiting for a favourable opportunity to join them, as soon as they have left the public road and got into the narrow lane that leads to the stone-pits. An opportunity soon occurred, for Aaron drawing nearer overheard Eppie telling Silas that she would like to have a little garden; so breaking into the conversation he promised to dig one for her and to stock it with plants as well. After Aaron had turned back to the village promising that he and his mother would come and have tea with them that afternoon, Eppie and her foster-father went on to their little home, now brightened by the presence of happy animal life, and made more comfortable by gifts of furniture received from Godfrey Cass. After Eppie had spread the clean cloth on the table, and they had eaten their Sunday dinner, Silas went out into the garden to smoke—a practice he had adopted, not because he particularly enjoyed it, but because, since Eppie had come to him, he had humbly followed every custom sanctioned by popular usage and consent as good; for in trying to enter into the lives of his neighbours in order to learn what was needful for Eppie, he had unconsciously imitated them in other matters as well. He had learnt, too, to assimilate the religious life and belief of Raveloe with that of his earlier years at Lantern Yard. He had slowly recovered some of his former faith in God and love for man. Dolly Winthrop, to whom he had related the troubles of his earlier life, had helped to teach him the lesson of trust in the goodness of God, even when we cannot see the justice of His dealings.

He had told Eppie the story of her mother's death and of her adoption by himself. Protected as she was by the constant companionship and tender care of the weaver, she had grown up free from the vice and vulgarity of village life, and, though she was not curious about her father, she often thought of her unfortunate mother, and wondered how she came to die in such a pitiable manner.

Now that she was discussing with Silas the fencing of the proposed garden she went to pick up one of the large stones lying near the pit, which she thought would do to build the garden wall, and was astonished to find how far the level of the water had sunk in the pit. Silas Marner explained that this was due to drainage works that Godfrey Cass was supervising in the neighbourhood. Then they sat down together on the bank and Eppie told Silas how Aaron had proposed marriage to her, and how she was willing to marry him, but only on condition that she should not be separated from 'father Silas'. Silas, recognizing that she would need a protector when he grew old and died, made no objection to the proposal, but suggested referring the matter to Mrs. Winthrop, who would know, he said, what was best for Eppie and for Aaron too.

PAGE 146: 2. *his new treasure*: the golden-haired Eppie.

4. *peal*: series of sounds.

6. *retarded*: delayed.

8. *eligible*: suitable.

9. *rural*: rustic.

12. *stroking . . . heads*: equivalent to 'making a respectful salaam' in India.

12-13. *dropping . . . curtsies*: bending the knee in token of respect—a form of respectful salutation practised by women.

13. *ratepayer*: payer of local taxes.

15. *well-clad*: well-dressed.

17. *who . . . all*: which has changed them all.

18. *blonde*: fair.

20. *fuller in flesh*: stouter.

*indefinable look*: general appearance.

21. *marked*: perceptible.

22. *undulled*: still bright.

25. *bloom*: colour.

26. *fitfully*: occasionally.



PAGE 147. 1. *has . . . interest*: has become more entrancing in the passage of time.

1-4. *Often . . . fruit*: sometimes in process of time a face may lose its beauty, while the character of the person has become more lovely, so that the face affords no index to the worth of the soul.

4-5. *But . . . Nancy*: but Nancy has not lost her good looks.

6. *veracious*: truthful.

6-8. *speak . . . qualities*: reveal a character tried and proved by the test of experience.

8. *costume*: dress.

9. *has more significance*: has more meaning as a revelation of character.

9-10. *now the coquetries . . . with it*: now that it is no longer prompted by the youthful desire to attract admiration.

11-12. *has died . . . lips*: is no longer heard in Raveloe.

12-13. *was . . . fathers*: died.

14. *tall aged man*: Mr. Lammeter.

20. *some others*: e.g. Silas Marner, Mrs. Winthrop, Aaron, and Eppie.

26. *seem to . . . vision*: seem to be able to see distant objects more clearly.

27-8. *as is the way . . . life*: as often happens with those who have been short-sighted (myopic) in youth.

28. *answering*: responsive.

29. *frame*: body.

33-4. *the freshest . . . youth*: the most perfect flower of girlhood—Eppie.

34. *a blonde . . . girl*: a fair-haired maiden with dimples (small hollows) in her cheeks.

35-6. *to chastise . . . smoothness*: to make her curly golden locks lie evenly under, &c.

37-8. *the hair ripples . . . breeze*: the hair curls as persistently as the surface of a stream is ruffled by the March wind.

38. *ringlets*: curls.

40. *the bonnet-crown*: underneath her hat.

PAGE 148. 1. *vered*: annoyed, irritated.

6. *fustian*: coarse twilled cloth.

8. *in the abstract*: in general.

*puts it to him*: asks his opinion about the matter.

11. *divines* : guesses.  
 14. *lane* : a narrow road in the country, lying between hedges.  
 18. *red mountain-ash* : a tree that grows in hilly districts and has red berries.  
 22. *it 'ud take* : it would require.  
     *a deal of* : much.  
 26. *a bit o' garden* : a little garden.  
 27-8. *I could work . . . waste* : I could enclose a small plot of uncultivated ground.  
 29-30. *I could . . . spade* : I could do a little work with the spade.  
 31. *as* : that.  
 35. *without . . . formalities* : without going through any preliminary ceremonies, such as raising his hat and saying 'good morning'.  
 36. *It'll be play to me* : it will be a mere trifle for me.  
 37. *any odd bits of time* : or at any other time whenever I have a few minutes to spare.  
     *when . . . slack* : when there's not much work to do.  
 38. *let* : allow.  
 39. *willing* : willingly.

PAGE 149. 1. *I wasn't aware of you* : I did not know you were present.

2. *I see nothing* : I can attend to nothing.  
 5. *if you'll . . . good* : if you approve.  
 7. *settle* : decide.  
     *taken in* : enclosed.  
 11-12. *half . . . roguishly* : with a mixture of shyness and mischief, half-shyly, half-mischievously.  
 16. *turn* : little (work).  
 17-18. *and he . . . hands* : and he will not be so unkind as to deprive me in any way of the privilege of doing it.  
 19. *There, now, father* : that being so, father, &c.  
 22. *a deal livelier* : much more interesting.  
 25. *rosemary* : an evergreen garden-plant, with sweet-scented leaves.  
     *bergamot* : a kind of mint (fragrant herb).  
     *thyme* : a common aromatic garden herb.  
 26. *lavender* : a sweet-scented creeping plant with white or lilac-coloured flowers.  
     *only* : except.  
 29. *slips* : cuttings.

30. *no end of 'em* : a large number of them.

*gardening* : working in the garden.

31. *and throw . . . mostly* : and generally I have to throw them away.

*bed* : Hindustani, 'kiāri.'

32. *the missis* : the mistress, Mrs. Godfrey Cass.

33-5. *so as . . . Red House* : provided that you do not ask too much on our account at the Red House, or for anything that is of much value.

36. *built . . . cottage* : made an addition to the cottage.

37-8. *as I couldn't . . . else* : that I couldn't bear to seem presumptuous in asking for garden plants or any other thing.

39. *there's no imposin'* : there's no question of presumption.

40-150. 2. *there's never . . . up* : there is continual waste in every garden in the parish because the whole of the produce is never required when it is available.

PAGE 150. 2-5. *It's what . . . mouth*. I often think that nobody need starve if the utmost advantage were taken out of the land and there were no waste.

7. *mother . . . there* : mother will be anxious at my absence.

9. *fix* : decide.

13-14. *to set things . . . end* : to arrange things properly.

16. *went on* : continued their walk.

*sheltered* : shaded.

17. *in privacy* : alone and unobserved.

22. *roguish triumph* : mischievous delight.

24. *You're . . . puss* : a clever little rogue.

24-6. *with . . . face* : with the gentle expression on his face of those who in old age receive happiness because they are surrounded by those who love and care for them.

26-7. *you'll make . . . Aaron* : you will put yourself under a great obligation to Aaron.

28. *frisking* : gamboling.

34. *browsing* : grazing.

35-6. *not scornfully . . . trivialities* : not contemptuously indifferent to human frivolities.

PAGE 151. 2. *modified . . . views* : caused the donkey to change his mind.

3. *limped* : hobbled.

*without bidding* : without waiting to be asked.

5. *knowing* : intelligent.

6. *hysterical* : excited.

7. *with a worrying noise* : growling.

8. *tortoise-shell* : having peculiar brown markings, like the shell of a turtle.

10. *lady-mother* : the female cat, mother of the kitten.

11. *sunning* : warming in the sunlight.

12. *sleepy* : lazy.

16. *living-room* : day-room, the room in which the daily work was carried on.

20. *were hardly . . . seen* : were better than one would expect to see.

23-4. *did . . . by* : acted very kindly towards.

24-5. *and it was . . . looked on* : and it was only right that a man should be regarded with favour.

29. *the weaving was going down too* : the trade of linen-weaving was less prosperous than before.

30. *there was less . . . spun* : the fibres of the flax plant were not used for weaving linen cloth so much as formerly.

31. *none so young* : getting old.

35. *had taken . . . colour* : was of an entirely different nature from what it had been before.

36. *foursecore and six* : eighty-six.

37. *in his chimney corner* : by his fireside.

38. *at his door-sill* : in the doorway of his house.

40. *would come to light* : would be found.

PAGE 152. 1. *leastwise* : at any rate.

*would be . . . answer* : would be held responsible, would be punished.

2-3. *his faculties . . . ever* : his mind was in no way clouded by old age.

10. *conveniences* : comforts.

12-14. *The gods . . . roots* : the ancient Romans used to worship household gods called Lares and Penates. Any object, even a stick or a stone, may under certain conditions become an object of worship among uncivilized people, as in West Africa, and then it is called a fetish. Even in civilized countries men have a feeling of love and veneration for certain familiar household ornaments, or fittings, or furniture, after they have become old-fashioned or even ridiculous in the eyes of others. And we should be careful in our criticism of such veneration lest we weaken the sources of love and faith in ourselves.

16-17. *half-absorbedly*: with incomplete attention as if immersed in thought.

19-20. *that . . . thoughts*: well calculated to attract and fix attention.

20-1. *with the rippling . . . hair*: with her wavy golden locks.

22. *set off by*: in contrast with.

24. *like a design . . . -handle*: if you can imagine Eppie to be the jug, the cat clinging to her shoulder might represent the handle.

25. *puss*: the cat.

26. *morsel*: a small piece of meat.

27. *desisting*: ceasing in his attempts to seize the morsel held out of his reach by Eppie.

28. *a cogent . . . growl*: a loud, fierce growl.

29. *futility*: uselessness.

*her*: the cat's.

33-4. *I must clear away*: I must remove the dishes and the table-cloth.

34. *godmother*: Dolly Winthrop was her godmother.

36. *taken to*: formed the habit of.

38. *sages*: wise men.

PAGE 153. 1. *which . . . answer for*: which was responsible for.

4-5. *a humble . . . in*: a docile acceptance of.

6. What were the other characteristics of that 'new self'?

8. *the only . . . by*: the only guidance his puzzled mind could perceive and follow.

10. *out of the darkness, &c.*: from he knew not where, just as his money had gone he knew not where.

13-14. *to appropriate . . . life*: to follow the customs and beliefs which were the forces shaping character in Raveloc.

15. *reawakening sensibilities*: recovered power of feeling.

16. *to ponder over*: to meditate upon.

17. *blend . . . impressions*: mingle them with his new ideas.

17-19. *till he . . . present*: till he felt once more that he was the same man subject to the same experiences as in his early days at Lantern Yard.

19-23. *The sense . . . years*: the belief in the existence of a Providence watching over us and the feeling of confidence in our fellow men, which always accompany peace of mind and innocent enjoyment, made him reflect vaguely that

the gloom and darkness, in which the years of his youth and maturity had been passed, must have been due to some misunderstanding on his part.

29. *readiness of interpretation*: quickness of understanding.

29-30. *whose narrow . . . customs*: whose limited experience gave her no opportunity of quickly comprehending unfamiliar modes of life.

31. *novelty*: new thing.

*source*: cause.

31-2. *that arrested . . . narrative*: that interrupted them at every stage in the story.

33. *by fragments*: a little at a time, gradually.

33-5. *and at intervals . . . for her*: and at sufficiently long intervals to enable Dolly to think about what she had heard until it had lost its sense of novelty to her.

36. *climax*: crisis.

37. *false testimony*: see p. 11, l. 35 above.

39. *this plan*: drawing lots.

40. *clearing*: proving the innocence of.

PAGE 154. 1. *yourn's*: yours is.

5. *every bit*: entirely.

11. *happen*: perhaps.

*as know . . . is*: who can explain it all.

12. *I'll be bound*: I am sure.

12-13. *it takes . . . things*: it requires long words to explain such things.

14. *make . . . on*: understand very well.

15. *a bit*: a little.

16. *I know . . . words*: I know they are good words that I hear at church.

16-17. *what . . . mind*: that which troubles your mind.

17-20. *as, if Them . . . innocent*: that if God had treated you justly, He would never have allowed you to be expelled from church membership, as a wicked thief, when you were innocent.

22. *phrasology*: way of talking, method of speaking—referring to God as 'Them'.

24. *clave*: remained faithful to me.

24-5. *above nor below*: in heaven or earth.

25. *as I'd . . . in wi'*: whom I had accompanied both indoors and out-of-doors.

26. *went halves*: shared everything together.

27-8. *had lifted . . . me* : had become my enemy.  
*worked* : plotted.

29-30. *as there's . . . such* : that there is any one else like him.

32-4. *as sure . . . on it* : as surely as I feel that a thing is not really lost (when I have mislaid it), and that I shall soon find it again.

36. *you'd no call . . . heart* : you were wrong to despair.

38. *leeching . . . poulticing* : applying leeches or fomentations—attending to the sick.

*as, which.*

40-155. 2. *Dolly . . . to* : Dolly was such a useful woman, and was so often needed to look after the sick, that there were many opportunities for 'things to come into her head' (i. e. for bright ideas to strike her mind), as she said they did, when she was nursing.

PAGE 155. 5. *to bring home Eppie's washing* : to bring back Eppie's garments after washing them.

*sore puzzled* : much perplexed.

6. *a good bit* : a long time.

7-8. *and it got . . . hold on* : and it was so puzzling that I could not at first think of any solution.

9-10. *But it come . . . Fawkes* : but the true explanation of the mystery suddenly dawned upon me the night I was watching by the bedside of poor Bessy Fawkes.

12. *I've got hold on it now* : I understand it now.

13. *anyways . . . end* : or whether I can put it into words at all.

14-15. *For I've . . . out* : for I often have many thoughts which I can never express.

15-17. *and for what . . . clever* : and those people who, you say, utter extempore prayers, or prayers they have learnt by rote, instead of reading them from the prayer-book, must be astonishingly clever.

18. '*Our Father*' : the first words in the Lord's Prayer.

19. *as . . . me* : which I remember after I have left the church.

19-20. *I might . . . knees* : I might kneel down to say my prayers.

21. *mostly* : generally.

21-2. *as . . . on* : which I can understand.

23-37. 'Well, Mr. Marner, the explanation of your trouble came into my mind something like this : I cannot

explain the false testimony of the drawing of lots ; perhaps it would require the rector to do that, and he could only tell us about it in long words. But when I was anxious about poor Bessie Fawkes, it occurred to me—as it always does when I am sorry for people, and feel how little I can do to help them, even if I rise from my bed at midnight to look after them—it occurred to me that God above must be much more pitiful and loving than I am—for I cannot be more tenderhearted than my Creator—and that if anything seems harsh and cruel to me, it must be because I am ignorant of some of the facts ; and this is not surprising, for I know very little indeed.'

37-156. 20. 'And in that connexion I thought of you, Mr. Marner, and my mind was flooded with light. If I felt for you in my heart, and wished that you might be justly and fairly treated, and if those people in Lantern Yard, except that wicked one (William Dane), who prayed and drew the lots—if they would have acted justly and fairly to you, if they had known how, does not God who made us, know all about us, and has he not a kinder purpose towards us than any one else can have ? And that's all I can be certain of ; and everything else seems a great mystery when I think about it. For when there was an epidemic of fever in the village the grown-up people died, and the little children were left defenceless ; and sometimes people break their limbs ; and those who want to be sober and to do what is right suffer at the hands of the wicked—yes, the world is full of trouble, and there are some things of which one can never see the justice. And we can only trust in the goodness of God, Mr. Marner, do what is right as far as we can, and trust Him. For if we poor ignorant people can see a little of what is good and right, we may be certain that there is a good and a right greater than we can understand—I feel in my heart that this must be so. And if you had not lost your trust in God, Mr. Marner, you would not have left your fellow men and become a recluse.'

The eternal problems of sin and suffering, injustice and oppression, troubled Dolly Winthrop as they troubled Shakespeare, and where in literature has the trouble been more bravely met, or more nobly overcome ? We have a little love, a little knowledge, a little sympathy. It is impossible to believe that God, who made us, is not more loving, more sympathetic, and of greater knowledge than



ourselves. Therefore we must leave it to Him. We must do the right thing as far as we can, and trust in Him.

PAGE 156. 23. *compunction* : remorse at having been too hard on Silas Marner.

31. *dark* : mysterious.

33. *dialogue* : conversation.

34. *to part with her* : to be separated from her.

35. *dame school* : a private school kept by a woman.

36. *first step* : i. e. reading.

38. *outpouring* : mutual confidences.

PAGE 157. 3-4. *delicate reticence* : tactful reserve.

5. *gossips* : talkative women.

6. *parried* : evaded.

7. *shrouding* : hiding.

8-9. *which . . . minds* : which would have erected a painful barrier of reserve between them, and prevented mutual trust and confidence.

10. *lowering* : degrading.

17. *freshness* : innocence.

18-19. *an invariable . . . rusticity* : a quality inseparable from country people.

19-21. *Perfect love . . . beings* : perfect love has an inspiring, purifying influence which can ennoble the behaviour towards one another of even the most ignorant people.

23. *gleam* : the light from his window.

*beckoned* : attracted.

24. *other things* : thoughts and feelings.

25. *delicate prettiness* : refined beauty.

26-7. *a touch . . . fervour* : an air of purity and enthusiasm.

29-30. *to rove into questions* : to wander into thoughts of such a nature as to suggest questions.

33. *presented . . . her* : occurred to her.

35. *wasted* : emaciated.

36. *lackered* : varnished.

37. *delivered* : gave.

*charge* : keeping.

PAGE 158. 1. *a father* : i. e. a father by adoption, a foster-father—Silas Marner.

4. *forlornness* : solitary and neglected condition.

5. *pressed on* : occupied.

- ✓ 14. *arrested* : attracted.  
 ✓ 16. *like a . . . cadence* : which sometimes interrupted her playful moods like a sadder, slower harmony interrupting a joyous burst of music.  
 17. *take . . . into* : include in.  
 18. *just against it* : close to it.  
 20. *get more and more* : go on increasing.  
 22-3. *enjoying . . . puffs* : enjoying the intervals of smoking more than the smoking itself.  
 26. *mayhap* : perhaps.  
 27. *to a thought* : with a suggestion.  
 28. *and things* : and other animals.  
 29. *to be got at* : to be obtained.  
 29-30. *by what I can make out* : so far as I know.  
 38. *to go all round* : to complete the circumference of the wall.  
 39. *no bigger* : any larger.  
 40. *turnip* : Hindustani, 'chakanda.'  
*delicate made* : slightly built.

PAGE 159. 1. *a tender intonation* : in an affectionate tone.

6. *and things* : and other materials.  
*the rest* : the remainder.  
 12. *how the water's gone down* : how the level of the water has sunk.  
 15. *Well, to be sure* : yes, indeed !  
 16. *begun on* : commenced.  
 17. *I reckon* : I suppose.

*The foreman* : overseer, workman set over others. Hindustani, 'chaudhri.'

19-20. *I shouldn't . . . bone* : I should not be surprised if we drain your piece of waste land quite dry.

21. *had gone into* : had taken up the question.

23. *odd* : strange.

35-6. *as if . . . car* : as if it meant more than he said. }  
 He was suggesting that she needed a husband to look after }  
 her.

✓ 40. *An ash* : a kind of tree noted for its strong, tough, and elastic wood.

✓ PAGE 160. 1. *made . . . screen* : afforded a chequered shade.

✓ 2. *happy playful shadows* : and cast moving shadows suggestive of happy, sportive children or young animals.

- ✓ 7. *fell in . . . thought* : was, in harmony with the thought in the background of his own mind.  
 8. *subdued tone* : gentle voice.  
 10. *ingenuously* : naively.  
 16. *a-going in* : nearly, approaching the age of.  
 17. *now . . . up* : now that Mr. Mott has retired.  
 19. *to take him on* : to employ him.  
 21. *a sad smile* : why sad?  
 22-3. *with dimpling laughter* : with laughter that revealed the pretty little hollows in her cheeks.  
 37. *a bit* : at all.

PAGE 161. 3-4. *I'd sooner . . . change* : I would sooner not marry, but let things go on as at present.

6. *pretty* : well, kindly.  
 9. *his mother's lad* : the true son of his mother.  
 18. *o'er young* : too young.  
 20. *come at* : find.  
 25. *belike* : probably.  
     *if I don't . . . altogether* : if I don't actually die.  
 30. *as 'll outlast . . . life* : who will outlive you.  
 35. *trembling* : tremor.  
 37. *your godmother* : Mrs. Winthrop.  
 38. *her son* : Aaron.

PAGE 162. 1-2. *that medicinal appliance* : the pipe which was used for 'medical reasons'—because it could do no harm, and might do good!

3. *done* : smoked.

## CHAPTER XVII.

SUMMARY.—Meanwhile Mr. Lammeter and his daughter Priscilla were eating their midday meal with Nancy and Godfrey Cass. Thanks to Nancy's influence things had changed at the Red House, and cleanness and order reigned where formerly there had been untidiness and confusion. Priscilla resisted Nancy's invitation to her and her father to remain to tea and to drive home in the evening, on the score of household duties. Walking with Nancy in the garden waiting for the gig to be got ready she advised her to start a dairy. It would occupy her time, she said, and prevent her from grieving too much over the fact that she was childless—for Nancy's only baby had died

at birth. This remark recurred to Nancy, when, after her relatives had departed and Godfrey had gone to look round the farm, she thought of her trouble and wished that Godfrey could be resigned to the absence of children from his fireside. She loved him dearly, but she had a strong and rather capricious sense of duty, which in this instance forbade her to adopt a child, as such a proceeding would, she thought, be opposed to the expressed will of God. Rousing herself from her reverie she bent her eyes again upon the Bible which was lying open on her knees, when she was interrupted by the arrival of the maid with the tea-things. She had brought the tea a little earlier than usual in order to have an opportunity of informing her mistress that there was some stir in the village—people hurrying all in one direction; and she could not think what had occurred. Nancy gave a reassuring answer, but she felt ill at ease, and anxious for her husband's return.

6. *discoursing* : talking.

7. *fleckered* : chequered.

9. *to stay tea* : to remain to drink tea.

10. *nap* : sleep.

13. *dessert* : fruit.

14. *filberts* : hazel-nuts.

18. *bachelor days* : unmarried days.

19. *under . . . Squire* : during the period when the old squire was a widower.

21. *to scittle* : to remain.

✓ *from . . . boards* : from the border of oak boards, three feet wide.

23. *ranged* : placed one above the other.

*antlers* : branching horns.

24. *mantelpiece* : shelf projecting over the fireplace.

29. *tankards* : drinking-vessels.

✓ *side-table* : sideboard, a kind of table, with cupboard underneath, placed on one side of a dining-room.

*the bossed* : embossed, covered with raised knobs.

✓ 30. *dregs* : lees, liquid (wine or beer) remaining at the bottom of the vessel.

31. *to . . . suggestions* : to emit a disagreeable odour.

✓ 33. *vases . . . spar* : ornamental vessels made of a crystal-line mineral found in Derbyshire.

✓ 34-36. *it was entered . . . spirit* : Nancy first entered it and made her influence felt.

PAGE 163. 1. *call*: necessity.

10. *And reason good as*: and there is a good reason why, &c.

13. *as it can't but do*: as must happen.

15-16. *It's . . . master*: it is much the best way to manage things.

16. *do the ordering*: give the orders.

18. *a stroke*: a sudden seizure (of disease).

22. *as you may stay to tea*: so that you may remain and drink tea.

26. *gig*: a light two-wheeled vehicle.

28. *dairymaid*: girl engaged in dairy work. A dairy is a place where milk is kept, and butter and cheese are made from it.

29. *turned Michaelmas*: when Michaelmas arrives—the feast of St. Michael, September 29.

*she'd as lieve*: she would as soon.

30. *a pig-trough*: a long open stone or wooden vessel in which pigs' food is placed.

*pans*: shallow tin vessels used for domestic purposes.

31. *That's . . . all*: all the maids behave in that way.

32. *the world . . . made*: there was to be a new world.

35. *put in*: placed between the shafts of the gig.

37. *turf*: grass.

38. *cones . . . yew*: it was the custom to cut the yew-trees into certain shapes, e. g. cones, arches, and walls.

PAGE 164. 2. *It's . . . pities*: it's a great pity, it's very unfortunate.

3-4. *fill your mind*: occupy your thoughts.

4-5. *There's nothing . . . pass*: when people need some responsible and anxious work to occupy their time, a dairy is better than anything else.

5. *rubbing*: polishing.

8. *something fresh with*: something new in.

9. *conquering . . . no*: making the milk produce butter whether the conditions are favourable or not.

12. *low*: depressed.

16. *make up*: atone for the lack of children.

20. *It drives . . . patience*: it makes me impatient.

21. *way*: habit.

22. *easy*: satisfied.

26. *swallowing . . . strong*: drinking some intoxicant.

27. *they're . . . haste*: they are obliged to drink it quickly.

28. *joyful . . . spoken*: I am glad to say it.

32-3. *as have . . . veins*: who are of a discontented, unsatisfied disposition.

38-9. *lay by for*: make provision for, save money for.

39-40. *and he always . . . little*: and he had always so looked forward to having little children to play with and dandle on his knee.

PAGE 165. 1. *'ud hanker*: would long (for children).

4. *set one on*: incite one.

6. *'em*: their husbands.

8. *grey*: grey horse.

11. *what . . . had*: what a finely proportioned animal the grey horse, Speckle, was.

14. *that spirited time*: the period of vigour and energy.

15. *effaced . . . of*: forgotten by.

16. *Mind you bring*: do not forget to bring.

*the Warrens*: Mr. Lammeter's house.

16-17. *before . . . out*: during the week.

17. *injunction*: request, command, exhortation.

19. *incitement*: stimulus.

20. *against*: near.

25. To make plans for the improvement of their cultivation while walking at a slow pace.

27. *generation*: the period to which she belonged.

27-8. *outdoor management*: the control of outdoor work, e.g. poultry, dairy-farming.

28. *were not . . . walking*: were not in the habit of walking far.

31. *Mant's Bible*: a Bible with a commentary written by Richard Mant, Bishop of Down (1776-1848).

33. *them*: her eyes.

35-6. *rarely . . . keeping*: seldom quite out of harmony.

37. *the book*: the Bible.

37-166. 1. *She was not . . . simple life*: her religious education was not sufficiently advanced for her to have any clear idea of the connexion between the ancient and holy books which she read at random (i.e. without any reason for selecting one rather than another) and her own undistinguished, humdrum existence.

PAGE 166. 1-6. *but the spirit . . . solicitude*: but the desire to do right, and the feeling that it was her duty to

exercise a good influence upon others, which were very characteristic of Nancy, caused her frequently to recall the deeds and sentiments of her past life and to examine them anxiously to discover whether there had been anything worthy of blame in them.

6. *courted*: occupied.

8. *living inwardly . . . experience*: by continually recalling all that she could remember of her past life.

11. *doubled*: because all that she did and said affected two people, no longer one.

11-18. She remembered the little things—the glances, words, and phrases—in the first days after her marriage, days which were to her the beginning of a new experience, in which the sphere of her influence and the extent of her difficulties were alike increased, required as she was to control her temper under occasional petty annoyances, or to persevere in the path of duty, or in what she considered to be such, even in opposition to those she loved; and as she recalled the familiar scenes she wondered continually whether her conduct had invariably been free from blame.

18-24. *This excessive . . . narrow*: this too great introspection and self-examination is an unwholesome practice, perhaps unavoidable when a very conscientious woman is prevented by circumstances from expending her energy in bodily activities or in tending children—unavoidable, that is, in the case of a generously inclined childless woman with too much time on her hands.

27. *peremptory demands*: pressing duties.

*to divert energy*: to distract her attention.

28. *superfluous scruple*: or from the pangs of a too tender conscience.

29. *main thread*: chief cause.

30. *hung*: depended

31-2. *revived in retrospect*: recalled to memory.

32-4. *The short . . . afternoon*: the brief conversation with Priscilla in the garden had caused her memories to flow in that familiar channel this Sunday afternoon.

34-9. *The first . . . blame*: as she followed the words of Scripture with her eyes and repeated them silently with her lips her thoughts would wander, and the first time this happened was when she found herself elaborating the defence of her husband against the charge which Priscilla had hinted.

39-40. *The vindication . . . wounds* : to find a defence for those we love is the best way to soothe the feelings they have injured.

PAGE 167. 1. *on his mind* : to think about.

✓ 2. *supports . . . face* : preserves her happiness.

3. *unfeeling* : unkind, thoughtless.

5. *dwelt on* : brooded over.

6-7. *as a privation . . . himself* : as a constant source of grief.

15. *just* : exactly.

17. *burial-dress* : Nancy had had but one child, which died at birth.

17-21. *But under this . . . not given* : but Nancy bore this great grief of hers so bravely and unflinchingly, that years ago she had suddenly given up the habit of opening the chest of drawers in order to look at the little garments of her dead child, for fear she should be encouraging a useless desire for what God had not granted her.

22-5. *Perhaps . . . husband* : unselfish as she was, the more severely she blamed herself for regretting the absence of a child the more she condoned such useless longing in her husband.

29. *that . . . more* : that would give him something to look forward to in the future.

32-3. *trying . . . saw it* : endeavouring by a special effort of sympathy to look at things from Godfrey's point of view.

33-4. *there came . . . self-questioning* : she again reviewed her conduct to see whether she had been in any way to blame.

35. *to lighten Godfrey's privation* : to lessen Godfrey's burden of sorrow.

✓ 39. *remote from* : alien to. It is more common to adopt children in India than in England.

PAGE 168. 1. *Nancy had her opinion on it* : in all matters that fell within her provinces Nancy had a decided opinion of her own. To her everything was right or wrong. Nothing was indifferent.

6. *unwaveringly acted upon* : firmly carried out.

6-9. *They were . . . action* : her opinions were firm, not because they were founded on a basis of reason, but because she was guided rather by feeling than reason, and once she felt a thing was right, nothing could convince her it was wrong. She was, we have seen, 'as



constant in her affection towards a baseless opinion as towards an erring lover'.

9. *proprieties* : decencies.

10. *filial behaviour* : love and obedience to parents.

10-11. *the arrangement . . . toilette* : the proper way of dressing for the evening.

12. *her unalterable little code* : set of rigid little rules.

14-15. *She carried . . . way* : she never forced her opinions, strongly as she held them, upon the notice of others.

20. *cheese-colouring* : the saffron-coloured dye used for giving the characteristic yellow colour to cheese.

20-2. *That . . . regulated* : that example, though unimportant in itself, was significant of the way Nancy ruled her life in accordance with principles of her own selection.

23. *rigid principles* : hard and fast rules.

23-4. *no . . . feeling* : no unworthy selfish feeling.

27-8. *in spite of Providence* : in opposition to God's will.

29. *turn out well* : prosper.

30. *what . . . without* : that which had evidently been denied them for some good purpose.

31-4. *When . . . for it* : it was wrong, in Nancy's opinion, even to continue to wish for a blessing denied by God.

36-8. *But the conditions . . . thinking* : she was right enough in supposing that it is wrong to wish for what Providence refuses, but she had her own ideas as to what constituted such a refusal.

39. *making . . . place* : buying anything at a particular shop.

40-169. 1. *some other . . . sending* : some other unforeseen accident or chance. Nancy believed that 'all chance (is) direction which we cannot see'.

PAGE 169. 6. *remonstrances* : objections to her arguments.

*she* : Godfrey wanted to 'adopt' his own child Eppie, but he dared not tell Nancy she was his.

9. *fitter* : more suitable.

*station* : position, rank in life.

10. *Where . . . likelihood* : what is the probability.

20. *transported* : deported to a convict settlement in another country for a criminal offence.

25-34. *It might seem singular . . . system* : many religious

people, sufficiently well educated to give a logically consistent account of their faith, think very much as Nancy did—that if we have not received a certain blessing it is because God has willed otherwise, and we should not desire it, or seek to obtain it. Resignation to the will of God is of course very praiseworthy. But educated persons often fall into the same mistake as the uninstructed Nancy in deciding without sufficient evidence what God's will is. It might seem strange that the same error should thus be committed by educated and uneducated alike, did we not reflect that human belief is incapable of artificial regulation.

35. *specified* : pointed out.

37-8. *would rather . . . Eppie* : would rather die than give up Eppie.

38-40. *Surely . . . with* : Godfrey supposed that the weaver would certainly desire the welfare of the child he had reared with so much trouble to himself, and would rejoice at her good fortune.

PAGE 170. 3-4. *provided . . . deserved* : cared for as he deserved in return for the great kindness he had shown in looking after the child so well.

4-6. *Was it not . . . lower* : was it not very right and proper that people of a higher rank in life should relieve a poorer man of a responsibility which they were better able to discharge than he ?

7-8. *reasons that were known only to himself* : what reasons ?

8-10. *and by a common fallacy . . . desiring it* : and he fell into the common error of supposing that the thing would be easy because for personal reasons he strongly desired it.

10-11. *This was . . . Eppie* : this was not a very refined way of considering the relationship which existed between Silas and Eppie.

15. *callous palms* : horny hands—hands made hard by manual labour.

16. *scant means* : small incomes.

17-18. *of entering . . . experience* : of realizing and sympathizing with all that was peculiar in the weaver's mental and emotional history.

21. *an unfeeling project* : an unkind proposal.

21-4. *his natural kindness . . . illusion* : that soul-

destroying period when he was capable of wishing evil to others was past. His natural kindness of heart had reasserted itself. Nancy's description of him as 'the best of husbands' was not all self-deception.

27. *to say him nay* : to object to his proposal to adopt a child.

29-30. *standing out against* : opposing.

30-1. *thrown out* : hinted.

31. *that . . . ill-luck* : that they had been unfortunate.

33. *blank* : dull.

1. PAGE 171. 3. *forced* : compelled, because she felt she could not go against her principles.

4. *insensible to* : regardless of.

5-6. *and did Nancy . . . obstinacy* : and did not attribute wrong motives to her firm refusal to accede to his wishes in the matter of adopting a child.

8. *clinging to* : devotion.

8-9. *flower-born dew* : dew on the flowers.

10. *more wavering* : weaker, less firm, more vacillating.

11. *too averse . . . truthful* : which sometimes followed devious ways and even took refuge in falsehood rather than face unpleasantness.

12. *was kept . . . awe* : experienced a certain reverence not unmixed with fear.

13-14. *with a yearning . . . them* : with a longing to anticipate his wishes.

15. *the truth* : that he was Eppie's father.

16. *the repulsion* : the feeling of disgust.

19. *repulsion* : dislike.

21. *ignorance . . . evil* : innocence.

21-2. *might . . . frame* : might even injure her none too robust bodily health.

25. *irreparable breach* : a hopeless separation.

27. *make up his mind* : reconcile himself.

28. *hearth* : fireside, hence 'home'.

29-30. *Why did his mind . . . void* : why did his thoughts travel sorrowfully to that deprivation ?

31-6. *I suppose . . . untried good* : middle-aged men and women who have never realized that life cannot be perfectly happy, are apt to be disappointed when they find it tedious or wearisome, and to seek for a reason for their discontent in the absence of some blessing they have never experienced.

36. *Dissatisfaction* : a discontented man.

37. *musingly* : reflectively.

*on a childless hearth* : in a childless home.

38. *greeted* : welcomed, hailed with delight.

✓ 40. *nursery* : a piece of ground where plants are reared.

*it* : i.e. dissatisfaction, or the discontented man.

✓ 40-172. 1. *sees a black care hovering . . . them* : thinks with deep anxiety of the future of each one of them.

PAGE 172. 1. *impulses* : natural instincts.

1-2. *by which men abandon* : which prompt men to abandon.

2. *seek for ties* : desire a wife and children.

5. *solicited . . . lot* : occupied by this one drawback to his happiness.

7. *gave . . . retribution* : regarded his childlessness as a punishment for his neglect of Eppie.

9-10. *any . . . difficult* : it became more difficult to atone for his fault.

12. *allusion to the subject* : reference to the question of adopting a child.

13. *for ever buried* : would be never mentioned again.

16. *miss* : absence.

18. *not . . . much* : not having much in common with his brothers.

19-20. *and trying . . . beforehand* : and anticipate trouble.

22. *reverie* : thoughtfulness.

23. *page* : the Bible.

25. *the tea-things* : the teapot and cups and saucers.

26. *Jane* : the servant.

26-7. *had her reasons* : had a reason for bringing the tea earlier than usual.

29. *No'm* : no, madam.

*with . . . emphasis* : somewhat significantly, implying more than she said.

31. *you've seen 'em, 'm* : you have seen them, madam.

32-3. *there's . . . way* : there are people hurrying in one direction.

33. *afore* : before.

33-4. *I doubt . . . happened* : I suspect some accident has happened.

36. *the top attic* : the little room at the top of the house.

*there's no seeing* : it is impossible to see.

38. *there's . . . matter* : nothing has happened of any importance.

39-40. *got out again* : escaped from confinement once more.

PAGE 178. 1. I only hope he will not pierce any one with his horns.

2-3. *not . . . calamities* : prepared to entertain any suggestion which enabled her to imagine a terrifying accident, or two.

12. *placid* : peaceful.

13. *hillocks* : graves covered with raised grass-grown earth.

14. *Before* : in contrast with.

16. *raven* : a bird of ill-omen.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

SUMMARY.—When at last Godfrey came into the room Nancy saw by his pale face and trembling hands that something had happened. When he had composed himself a little, he told her that the skeleton of Dunstan had been found in the stone-pits, from which all the water had now been drained. He added that Dunstan was the man who had robbed Silas Marner. The miser's money had been found in the pit. The secret of the theft was discovered at last. Godfrey went on to say that he too had a secret, which he had been keeping from Nancy for years, but which he felt he must now reveal—that the woman Marner had found dead in the snow was his wife, and Eppie his child. Godfrey paused, expecting Nancy to rise in anger and leave him. But nothing of the sort happened. She gently rebuked him through her tears, not for the wrong he had done her, but for the injustice he had inflicted upon Eppie, and Godfrey felt that his secrecy had defeated its own object, when Nancy added that she would have gladly taken Eppie in, had she known that she was his child. Godfrey hoped there was still time to retrieve his error. They would go that very night, he said, to Silas Marner, and reveal her parentage to Eppie, and bring her back with them into their home.

22. *stilled* : set at rest.

25. *abruptly* : suddenly.

32. *hissing urn* : boiling teapot.

PAGE 174. 2. *to . . . but me* : so that you might not hear it from any one but me.

2-3. *a great shock* : a very unpleasant surprise.

5. *quivering* : trembling.

7-8. *unequal . . . skill* : unable to show the tactful consideration.

9. *make his revelation* : break the news.

26. *shaken* : upset, moved.

27-8. *of whom . . . augured* : of whom a worse fate than death by drowning had been prophesied.

33. *The blood . . . neck* : Nancy blushed all over her face and neck.

35. *kinship* : connexion.

PAGE 175. 7. *something behind* : something more to come.

17-18. *I'll make sure of myself now* : I will settle the matter for all now, so that there can be no more hesitation on my part.

19-21. *The eyes . . . affection* : Nancy and Godfrey looked at each other with fear in their eyes, not knowing whether after the disclosure was made their mutual affection could continue.

28-9. *only that . . . meet his* : except that she looked down and no longer fixed her gaze upon his.

31. *You'll never . . . again* : you will never have the same respect for me again.

35. *kept it* : concealed the matter.

36. *led away* : inveigled, seduced.

PAGE 176. 1. *black* : evil, vile, heinous.

2. *severe notions* : strict ideas.

10-12. *an error . . . end* : a mistake which was not simply useless, but had prevented the accomplishment of his purpose.

12. *He had . . . wife* : he had not gauged the depth of the unselfish love.

16. *if you'd . . . ought* : if you had acknowledged the child as you should have done.

18. *bore* : borne, endured.

28. *talk* : scandal.

36. *tremulously* : with a trembling voice.

38. *made it up* : atoned for it.

39. *another* : Eppie.

39-40. *and I doubt . . . for* : and I fear you can never completely atone for the wrong done to her.

PAGE 177. 2. *plain and open* : honest and straightforward.

## CHAPTER XIX.

SUMMARY.—On the evening of the day on which the events related in the last chapter took place, Eppie and Silas were seated in the cottage. The recovered gold lay in orderly heaps on the table. Silas had been telling Eppie how much he had treasured the gold before, and how desolate he felt after its loss, until she was sent to him.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door, and when Eppie rose to open it, she was surprised to see Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass. Godfrey expressed his regret that a member of his family should have taken Silas Marner's money, and his satisfaction that it had been restored to him. He went on to speak in rather a tactless fashion of Silas's age and increasing feebleness, and of the insufficiency of his money to maintain himself and Eppie in comfort, ending by expressing his desire to adopt Eppie. Silas was much distressed at this proposal, but he was determined not to stand in the way of Eppie's happiness, and told her to speak and thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass.

Eppie, however, was not disposed to leave Silas, or to become a lady and give up her old friends, and she told Godfrey and Nancy so plainly, thanking them nevertheless for their kind thought of her. Godfrey felt angry that his virtuous resolves should meet with this unexpected opposition. He now told Silas that he had a claim on Eppie, that he was her father, and that her mother was his wife. Silas replied with some bitterness that he should have said so sixteen years ago, that they had learnt to love each other now, and it would break their hearts to be separated. Godfrey, however, insisted that it was his duty to take care of his own daughter, and that he intended to do so. Upon this Silas remained silent for many moments struggling with himself before he could make up his mind to withdraw his opposition to Eppie's departure, now that he had heard from her own lips that she wished to remain with him. But at last unselfish desire for the child's welfare triumphed over every other motive, and he said

that it might be as Godfrey wished: he would hinder nothing: let them speak to the child. But by this time Eppie had begun to entertain a feeling of repulsion against this unknown father who had left her mother and herself to their fate sixteen years ago, and now came forward to claim her against her will. She spoke coldly and with decision, telling Mr. and Mrs. Cass that their offers were far above her wish, that she could never think of any one except Silas as her father now, that she had not been brought up to be a lady, and could not bear the thought of giving up her old friends. Moreover, she was engaged, she said, to a working man, who had promised to live with Silas, and help her to look after him. Then Godfrey recognized that it was in vain to pursue the subject. He left the cottage abruptly in sorrow and anger, leaving Nancy to cover his retreat as best she might.

13-14. *the events*: what events?

17-22. *The excitement . . . impossibility*: Silas was still agitated. So sensitive had he become under the stimulus of his thoughts and feelings that he could not bear any interruption from outside. Not that he was weary. On the contrary his mental and emotional excitement prevented any desire for sleep.

24-5. *the strange definiteness . . . influence*: and how under the influence of this passing spiritual exaltation vulgar features seem in some extraordinary way to become clear cut and refined.

25-9. *It is as if . . . listener*: it is as if the soul within had caught the sound of heavenly voices and in response to their influence the dull body had become wonderfully transformed—just as the maiden 'Lucy' described by the poet Wordsworth reflected in her face the sweet influences of Nature among which she grew up:

. . . And she shall lean her ear  
In many a secret place  
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,  
And beauty born of murmuring sound  
Shall pass into her face.

PAGE 178. 1. *anged*: arranged.

6. *I'd . . . then*: I sometimes had a kind of feeling.

12. *After a bit*: after a time.

*it*: the gold.

13. *drove*: driven.



21. *the blessing was mine*: I derived the benefit from keeping you.

22-3. *one to the grave*: died.

24. *in time*: i.e. in time to save me from becoming a hopeless miser with no thought for anything but money.

28. *It . . . now*: it does not appeal to me now.

*ponderingly*: meditatively.

30. *I doubt*: I suspect, I fear.

✓ 35-6. *with the tenderness . . . eyes*: with unshed tears in her eyes and a loving look in her face.

38. *The flush deepened*: she blushed more deeply.

38-9. *She made . . . curtsy*: she curtsied to them after the fashion of country-folk.

*To curtsy*: to bend the knees with a downward movement of the body to denote respect. A form of salutation confined to women.

· PAGE 179. 1. *very late*: at a very late hour in the evening.

4. *tremulous*: trembling.

6. *against*: next to.

7-8. *with perfect firmness*: with absolute self-control, without showing any sign of emotion.

8. *it's a great comfort to me*: I am very pleased.

10. *one of my family*: Dunstan Cass.

11-12. *to make up*: to make amends.

13-14. *looked no farther than*: thought only of.

15. *beholden*: obliged.

18. *his fatherhood*: his being the father of Eppie.

19. *approached*: led up to.

20. *the disclosure*: the revelation of the fact that he was her father.

22. *urged*: strongly advocated.

22-4. *because . . . mother*: because she saw plainly how painfully Godfrey's treatment of her (Eppie's) mother must affect her.

25. *ill at ease*: uncomfortable.

26. *'belters'*: social superiors.

*florid*: red-faced, ruddy-cheeked.

28. *constraint*: shyness, reserve.

29. *a deal*: much.

31. *you . . . it*: it was not your fault.

✓ 34. *you're . . . contented*: a little suffices for you.

37. *bad off*: in a sad predicament, in a bad way.

37-8. *it was . . . by* : it was that which sustained me.

39. *when . . . from me* : when I had lost everything else. Silas is here referring not to the loss of his money, but of his happiness when he had ceased to trust in God and to love his fellow men.

39-40. *applying . . . wants* : supposing that Marner referred only to his bodily needs.

40. *it was a good trade* : it was a profitable business.

PAGE 180. 2-3. *past such close work* : too old for such assiduous work.

3. *laid by* : ceased work.

4. *pulled down* : enfeebled.

9. *It won't go far either way* : you can't do much with it in any case.

14. *unaffected* : not disturbed.

16-17. *There's few . . . that* : not many working people have saved as much money as that.

19. *a deal* : a large sum.

21-2. *blushing . . . after* : blushing all over her face the moment she had said it.

24. *this turn . . . view* : this change in conversation.

29. *approaching a proposition* : bringing himself to make a proposal.

30. *in the distance* : at first, when viewed from afar.

*done a good part by* : acted very kindly to.

34. *a strapping girl* : a big, strong girl.

35. *come of* : the offspring of.

36. *well off* : wealthy, in easy circumstances.

36-7. *and make . . . her* : and educate her as a lady.

37-8. *a rough life* : a life of toil and hard work.

38. *come to have* : have to live.

PAGE 181. 1-3. *Eppie . . . reality* : Eppie was simply surprised that Mr. Casp should in his conversation suggest ideas which there was no thought or possibility of putting into practice.

3-4. *but Silas . . . uneasy* : but Silas's feelings were injured, and he was troubled at Godfrey's remarks.

9. *to come to the point* : to delay no longer in explaining the object of his visit.

11. *and everything . . . have* : and all our other possessions.

17. *been at the trouble* : taken the trouble.

21-2. *and we should . . . comfortable* : and we should all be anxious to do everything possible for your comfort.

23-6. *A plain man . . . feelings* : a plain-spoken, simple-minded man like Godfrey, feeling himself in a delicate situation, is sure to commit the mistake of expressing himself more bluntly than he intended, and to run the risk of hurting sensitive feelings.

30. *powerless under* : a prey to, speechless under.

31. *alike* : equally.

32. *heart was swelling* : Eppie's sympathy was strongly aroused.

34. *struggling dread* : one fear conflicting with others. Silas dreaded lest Eppie should be taken from him. He feared that she might wish to go. He feared lest by keeping her he might stand in the way of her good fortune.

39. *came . . . step* : took a step forward.

40. *shyness* : timidity.

PAGE 182. 1-2. *banished . . . self-consciousness* : caused her to forget herself and her feelings about herself.

2. *she . . . curtsy* : she bent her knees and bowed her body very respectfully.

5. *nor . . . him* : nor allow any one to take his place.

6. *all the same* : nevertheless.

9. *Eppie's . . . little* : Eppie was on the verge of tears.

11. *with . . . sob* : with a short convulsive sigh.

14. *divided* : mingled.

19. *full of* : thinking only.

20. *retrieve his error* : atone for his mistake.

*as far as . . . him* : during the remainder of his life.

21-3. *he was . . . right* : under the stress of overmastering emotion he had determined to do a certain thing.

23-5. *and he was not . . . resolves* : and he was not ready to sympathize much with the feelings of other people leading them to oppose his resolution.

31-2. *I have . . . every other* : I have a claim which is above every other, that of a father upon his child.

33. *Eppie . . . start* : Eppie had made a sudden movement of surprise.

35-6. *lest his mind . . . hers* : lest she might not share his desire that they should not be separated.

36-7. *felt . . . free* : felt himself at liberty to oppose Godfrey's proposal.

37. *not without . . . fierceness* : and something of the anger of a parent against one who would remove his child.

38. *accent of bitterness* : tone of anger.

40. *his youthful hope* : what youthful hope ?

PAGE 183. 1. *say so* : say that you were her father.

7. *it falls . . . in* : it belongs to them who are willing to receive it.

10. *the edge* : the sting, the cutting reproach.

11-12. *with gathering excitement* : with increasing agitation.

17. *you might . . . reasonable* : you might take a more reasonable view of the matter.

18. *unexpectedly awed* : taken aback.

26. *bit* : food.

29. *You'd cut us i' two* : you would break our hearts.

31. *pregnancy* : weighty truth.

34. *sacrifice* : unselfishness.

35-6. *he felt himself called upon* : he felt it to be his duty.

36. *to assert his authority* : to insist on his right to take care of his own child.

PAGE 184. 1. *your own . . . uncertain* : it is uncertain how long you will live.

2. *her lot . . . fixed* : her fate may be decided.

4. *low* : vulgar.

6. *well-off* : prosperous.

12. *stirred* : moved, agitated.

16-17. *that black featureless shadow* : that vague unknown being.

18-20. *Her imagination . . . implied* : her thoughts had travelled backward into the past and forward into the future, guessing what sort of parent this newly discovered father had been, and what he would prove to be.

20-2. *and there were words . . . definite* : and she was able to form a clearer idea of what sort of father Godfrey would prove to be from certain of the words he had just uttered—their angry tone, his reference to 'some low working man', and his desire to coerce her into obeying his will.

24-5. *feelings . . . uttered* : the feelings of love and tenderness, of pity and sympathy that were aroused by every word that Silas had said.

25-7. *but they raised . . . father* : but her guesses as to his behaviour to her mother in the past, and apprehensions as to his possible treatment of herself in the future, quite apart from the feelings of love and sympathy aroused by Silas Marner's words, made her dislike her new father and his proposal to remove her from Marner's roof.

28. *stricken* : troubled.

30-1. *lest . . . good* : lest he should be selfishly interfering with Eppie's happiness.

32. *mute* : silent.

*self-conquest* : self-command, self-control.

33-4. *They . . . tremulously* : he uttered them with trembling lips.

36. *I'll hinder nothing* : I will raise no objection to your proposal.

37. *with all . . . affections* : sensitive and sympathetic as her own love made her to the feelings of others.

PAGE 185. 1. *hard trial* : sore affliction.

1-3. *but her code . . . foster-father* : but her rigid principles did not permit her to doubt that he who had actually begotten the child had a better claim upon her than he who had brought her up. Nancy's little code of rules allowed of no exceptions.

3-10. *Besides . . . good* : moreover Nancy, accustomed all her life to ease and comfort and the advantages of a certain social position, could not appreciate the happiness which early training and habit bestow upon the little interests and activities of those who have always been poor. In her opinion there could be no doubt that Eppie, in being acknowledged by Godfrey as his daughter, was about to enjoy benefits from which she had too long been excluded, but which were nevertheless very real benefits.

10. *relief* : restored satisfaction.

14. *some embarrassment* : a certain feeling of shame.

14-15. *under the sense . . . him* : due to the perception that she was old enough to condemn his conduct.

17. *who's . . . father* : who has acted as a father.

19. *come to love us* : grow to love us.

26. *a treasure* : a priceless possession.

31. *it . . . hand* : i. e. it was a soft hand, not hard or horny.

33. *with colder decision* : in a tone of greater firmness and severity.

38. *lone* : solitary.

39-40. *and I can't . . . him* : and I can't conceive of any happiness away from him.

PAGE 186. 2. *took* : taken.

3. *the first* : the beginning.

*cleave* : cling to him, remain with him.

4-5. *come . . . me* : separate us.

11. *His . . . point* : the tenderness of his conscience with regard to this matter.

15. *as . . . used to* : such as I have not been accustomed to.

16. *poor work* : a sorry business, an unpleasant task.

*put on things* : wear fine clothes.

17-18. *as 'ud . . . for 'em* : which would cause those I love to think they were no longer fit to associate with me.

19. What could I care for when I had lost the company of my friends and loved ones ?

20-1. *a pained . . . glance* : with a troubled look as if to ask what reply he would make to these words.

22. *pondering* : reflecting.

23. *absently* : in an abstracted manner.

24-5. *which . . . his* : which would come with a better grace from her mouth than his, which it would be easier for her to utter than for him.

29-30. *There's . . . than one* : there should be give and take on both sides.

31-2. *turn . . . on it* : refuse to accept it.

34. *impetuously* : with vehemence.

*while . . . gathered* : as her eyes filled with tears.

36. *fend* : provide.

38. *I can't . . . to it* : I cannot bring myself to tolerate the thought.

PAGE 187. 1. *as* : who.

4. *a smarting . . . eyes* : pained staring eyes.

4-8. *This frustration . . . stifling* : this defeat of an intention towards the fulfilment of which he had started, with the pleasing sense that he was about to atone to some extent for the greatest fault he had ever committed, made him feel as if the atmosphere of the room were choking him.

9. *undertone* : low tone.

12-13. *It's getting . . . now* : the hour is becoming late now.

14-15. *covered . . . departure* : tried to make her husband's sudden departure less noticeable.

## CHAPTER XX.

SUMMARY.—Nancy and Godfrey walked home together in silence after the interview related in the last chapter. They agreed, after they had entered the house and had seated themselves to consider the matter, that they must

give up all hope of having Eppie for a daughter. Godfrey admitted the truth of what Silas had said, that, when a man turns away a blessing from his door, it falls to somebody else. He said he would make provision for Eppie in his will, but that no good purpose would be served by publicly recognizing Eppie as his daughter now. Part of Godfrey's punishment, brought upon him by his own foolishness, was that his own daughter had formed a bad opinion of him, thinking that he had wronged her mother as well as herself. But of course Godfrey could not enlighten her as to her mother's character and addiction to the opium habit. He had Nancy, he said, in spite of everything, and he would try to be resigned to having no children in his home.

✓ 18. *the oaken parlour*: the sitting-room with panels made of oak wood.

20. *bonnet and shawl*: head and shoulder covering.

23. *jar . . . feeling*: irritate him.

24-5. *dwelling . . . meeting*: in a lingering gaze.

/ 29-30. *which . . . repose*: which would disturb their first moments of rest and consolation.

PAGE 188. 1. *bent*: stooped.

5. *her . . . of it*: her education and its result.

6-8. *with a keen . . . speech*: in a tone of sharp decision very different from his usual lazy and easy-going manner of speech.

9. *by paying . . . by*: by paying interest for the years during which we have postponed payment.

10-11. *While . . . growing*: while I have delayed doing my duty events have happened, which it is now too late to alter.

14. *to pass for*: to be considered as.

19. *where . . . anybody?* it would benefit nobody.

23. *the thing*: the fact of Eppie being your daughter.

24-6. *who thought . . . before*: who thought that she might now cherish unreprieved a feeling which she had hitherto tried to repress.

28-9. *more than . . . knowing that*: except about Dunsey's death and his having perpetrated the robbery. They cannot be prevented from knowing that.

30. *I shall . . . will*: I shall make provision for Eppie in my will.

34. *from telling . . . now*: from disclosing the fact of my being her father now.

35-7. *I've a notion . . . engaged to* : I think it must be Aaron Winthrop whom she referred to when she said she was betrothed to a working man.

PAGE 189. 1. *fell into thoughtfulness* : became reflective.

4. *and . . . eyes* : and her hair and eyes are exactly like yours.

5. *it . . . before* : I had never noticed it before.

10-11. *to confirm . . . impression* : to encourage her husband to entertain a belief that could only bring him pain.

12. *I . . . by* : I injured.

14. *she can never know all* : why could not Godfrey tell Eppie everything and justify his apparent neglect of his first wife, her mother ?

✓ 19. *and when . . . too* : especially when I evaded the performance of a father's duty.

✓ 20-2. *her spirit . . . compunction* : she could not honestly try to diminish the pain of what she knew to be a just remorse.

26. *grumbling and uneasy* : dissatisfied and troubled.

28. *wanting to* : lacking in your duty to.

30. *if you . . . given us* : if you could reconcile yourself to the fate God has provided for us.

✓ 32. *to mend . . . there* : to improve a little in that respect.

## CHAPTER XXI.

SUMMARY.—Next morning at breakfast Silas announced to Eppie his determination to revisit Lantern Yard to consult the minister there about the mystery of the drawing of lots, and to ask whether any evidence of his innocence had come to light in the years that had elapsed since he had left the town. Four days later they set out together, but on reaching the large manufacturing town where Silas had lived as a young man, he was astonished to find not only that so many changes had taken place that he could hardly find his way, but that Lantern Yard had disappeared altogether, and that the minister had gone no one knew where.

The night of their return to Raveloe Silas talked over the matter with Mrs. Winthrop, and they agreed that while many things are dark in this world, the path of duty is plain, and that Divine truth and justice do prevail although we cannot see them. Silas said that since Eppie



had been sent to him, and he had learnt to love her as himself, he had recovered his faith in God, or as he put it : 'I've had light enough to trusten by.'

PAGE 190. 3-4. *There's a thing . . . past*. There is one thing I have been wanting to do for two years past.

5. *turning . . . over* : revolving it in my mind.

6. *set out* : start on our journey.

8. *godmother* : i.e. Mrs. Winthrop.

*on* : of.

9. *a little . . . things* : a small parcel of things we shall need on the journey.

13. *come out* : come to light, been discovered.

15. *a deal o' light* : much spiritual knowledge.

18. *I partly think* : I am disposed to think.

23-4. *this little advantage* : what little advantage ?

24-6. *though possessed . . . journey* : though inspired with a vague fear of the dangers that might beset so long a journey.

30. *cleared from* : proved innocent of.

32. *that you would* : you would indeed.

33-5. *And if . . . it back* : and if any spiritual illumination is to be obtained at this Lantern Yard of which you speak, we need it in this world, and I shall be pleased to hear about it when you return.

PAGE 191. 2. *their Sunday clothes* : their best clothes, which they wore on Sundays.

18-19. *I know . . . yesterday* : I know how to find my way from Prison Street to Lantern Yard as well as if I had only left it yesterday.

21. *grim* : forbidding-looking.

22-3. *the first object . . . memory* : the first object which Silas remembered having seen in the old days.

23. *certitude* : certainty.

25. *drawing . . . breath* : heaving a sigh of relief.

27. *am't* : am not.

35. *I never . . . cosy* : I never felt comfortable.

37. *make 'em out* : I cannot remember them.

PAGE 192. 1. *straight for'ard* : straight on.

*for a bit* : for a short distance.

2. *entry* : entrance to a narrow passage.

3. *nick* : narrow opening.

4. *I can see it all* : I can remember it all.

5. *I'm like . . . stifled* : I feel as if I were choking.

10. *as it usened* : that it used.  
 11. *sallow, begrimed* : pale, dirty.  
 14. *issued . . . alleys* : emerged from the narrow passages.  
 15. *a broader strip* : a wider expanse, a larger patch of sky visible.  
 18. *a weekday noon* : midday on another day than Sunday.  
 22. *streaming* : pouring out, coming in large numbers.  
 28. *in strong agitation* : in great excitement, with much emotion.  
 36. *attacks* : fits.  
 40-193. 1. *nor . . . each* : nor by any other means at his disposal.

- PAGE 193. 3. *sweep* : swept.  
 7. *got at* : discovered.  
 8. *given . . . light* : afforded any satisfactory explanation.  
 9-10. *It's dark . . . last* : I don't understand it, Mrs. Winthrop. I suppose I never shall.  
 12. *placid* : calm, peaceful.  
     *bordered by* : fringed with.  
 13. *I doubt it may* : I fear the mystery may never be solved.  
 13-14. *It's the will . . . to us* : it is the will of God in heaven that we should not understand many things.  
 15. *as . . . about* : which I have never felt puzzled about.  
 16. *hard done by* : harshly treated.  
 18. *the rights of it* : the true explanation of it.  
 19-20. *for all . . . me* : although you and I cannot understand it.  
 23. *I've had . . . trusten by* : I have been sufficiently enlightened to trust in God.

## CONCLUSION.

- ✓ 28. *lilacs* : shrubs with purple and white flowers and a sweet scent.  
 ✓ *laburnums* : trees with golden chains of flowers.  
 29-30. *golden . . . wealth* : abundance of yellow and purple flowers.  
 30. *lichen-tinted walls* : walls of a purple-grey colour, owing to being coated with lichen—a kind of moss.  
 33-4. *when . . . set in* : when the season for hay-making and cheese-making had arrived.

PAGE 194. 1. *a light bridal dress* : a wedding-dress made of some light material.

4. *lilac tufts* : clusters of lilac flowers.

6. *though . . . renunciation* : though with a feeling that she must not indulge herself in so expensive a luxury.

8. *with the tiniest pink sprig* : sparsely ornamented with very small pink representations of twigs.

10-12. *previous . . . at once* : she was able to give a definite reply at once through having thought about the matter beforehand.

15. *the dash* : the splash of gold, &c.

PAGE 195. 1. *that* : the need of children.

1-3. *Things look . . . to be* : old people lose their hold on life ; they require young people about them, so that through their experiences their own interest in things may be reawakened.

4. *came out* : appeared at the doorway.

7. *to divine* : to guess.

8. *set* : placed.

13-14. *and him . . . rheumatiz* : and he is such a martyr to, suffers such pain from, rheumatism.

16-17. *and had . . . speech* : and had his speech ready.

19. *quavered* : shook, trembled.

24. *at . . . matrimony* : at the wedding service.

25. *a good while* : for some time.

31. *advent* : arrival.

*ample leisure* : plenty of time.

33-4. *and arrive . . . conclusion* : and conclude after duly considering the facts.

35-6. *negative this statement* : repudiate this opinion.

36-8. *he took . . . contradict him* : he adopted it as his own, assumed entire responsibility for it, and dared any one of the company to be so bold as to contradict him.

39-40. *and all . . . sentiment* : and whatever their differences of opinion on other matters might be they all agreed with Mr. Snell's dictum.

PAGE 196. 3. *the bridal group* : the small marriage party.

4-5. *whose . . . flavour* : whose jests were still appreciated by the company.

6. *to turn in there* : to go into the Rainbow Inn.

12. *to suit . . . family* : for the convenience of the larger number of people who would now reside in Silas Marner's cottage.

